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ABSTRACT

Intended for use by teachers at both the college and the secondary school level, this booklet describes a method of getting students to write using the motivation theories developed by the psychologist Abraham Maslow. The first chapter of the booklet reviews Maslow's basic principles as they apply to the teaching of writing, but includes a cautionary note to the effect that interested persons would do better to read Maslow in the original. The second chapter discusses the tools and methods available to teachers for assessing students' writing needs, while the third outlines a number of general motivational strategies for use in the classroom. The fourth chapter deals with designing writing assignments that meet students' needs and goals, and the fifth explains how to implement this type of writing program. A short list of resource references concludes the booklet. (RBW)

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Writing Teachers at Work

If Maslow Taught Writing

A Way to Look at Motivation in the Composition Classroom

by Ada Hill
Beth Boone

CS208686

The National Writing Project
University of California, Berkeley

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To Bill and Alan,
the Writing Project directors,
who encouraged us,
and to Les and Scott,
our families,
who kept us going.

Preface

Over the years, we've tried student journals, letters to other students, writing groups, and even writing to music in efforts to motivate students to write. But nothing has worked very well. Students who haven't been motivated to write just haven't been moved by anything we tried. And sometimes we have even turned off those who were motivated to begin with.

Now Beth Boone and Ada Hill are telling us why we have failed and how we might succeed. We've got to realize, they say, that students are motivated from within, not from without. Teachers can't motivate students, but they can be sensitive to their different motivational levels and find different ways to respond to these.

We have known Beth and Ada for about five years now. We met them first in inservice courses in teaching writing. Then, three summers ago, they were among the participants in our first writing project workshop. Probably no one is better prepared to write about motivating students. Both have taught in inner city high schools; one has chaired English departments in the inner city and in suburbia, and the other has taught composition at an urban university as well as to adult basic education students. They are particularly qualified to write about motivation as this booklet demonstrates. The suggestions here may not insure success, but they will help us be better and more effective teachers of writing.

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Capital Writing Project
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Contents

Preface. ..... *v*

Introduction 1

I. Some Maslow Basics for Writing Teachers 3

II. Which Students Need What? 11

III. Some General Motivational Strategies 22

IV. Making Assignments that Meet Student Needs 32

V. Implementation of the Program 60

Resources 64

Introduction

During the 1979 Summer Institute of the Capital Virginia Writing Project, we sat, listened, learned, presented, and wrote along with thousands of our colleagues who were similarly involved in one of more than seventy sites of the National Writing Project. One of us nervously chewed on pencils. The other persuaded a loving husband that the summer's survival was entirely dependent on eating out and husbandly housework.

Together, we talked, shared lunches, and searched for an appropriate way to avoid one of our major assignments: the collecting of an extensive annotated bibliography. Though we diligently read and assimilated scores of articles and a number of books, neither of us faced enthusiastically the prospect of annotating and commenting on our reading. Abraham Maslow arrived, at least figuratively, in time.

Less than two weeks before the end of our institute, we listened to an outside consultant talk about Abraham Maslow, his hierarchy of human needs, and motivation. One of us hastily passed a note to the other:

> This is it! Forget annotating! Let's try to apply Maslow's theories to the teaching of writing. Do you think we can pull this off in twelve days? Let's meet for lunch.

One sandwich and two beers later, we decided to try. Having obtained our mentor-professor's approval, we ran to the bookstore, bought Maslow's last book, *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* gave up sleep, and began the process of discovering exactly what might happen if Maslow taught composition in Room 101.

Within days we knew he would succeed. In less than a week, one of us was sleeping with an electric typewriter; the other discovered that writing could replace eating anywhere, out or in. Some fifty pages later, we knew we had been correct in pursuing the hunch, but we weren't sure why. For sure we knew that the brainchild of two annotated-bibliography avoiders needed to be tried and tested with students.

Two school years later, we are better able to understand why Abraham Maslow, when invited to the composition classroom, is such an asset. Maslow was right. We, as teachers, cannot directly motivate our

students, but in recognizing their needs and providing assignments, instruction, and evaluative techniques that meet their needs and goals, we have enabled our students to write more, and eventually better, than ever before. Now we would like to share what we have learned.

I

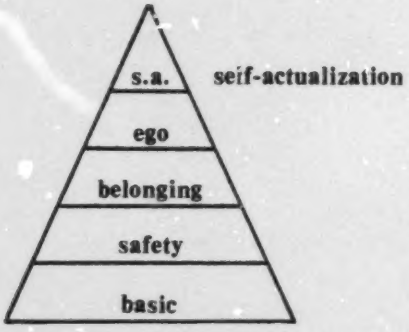
Some Maslow Basics for Writing Teachers

Interested persons should forego this section and read Maslow in the original. He is, in our current era of teacher accountability, basic skills, and academic censorship, an inspiration. Not only is his writing readable, it is extremely lively. Owning one's own copy of *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature,* a posthumously published collection of speeches, articles, and ideas, is much like owning a dog-eared family Bible, a best-loved book from childhood, or frequently-read poetry written by a lover.

On the other hand, stacks of student papers, departmental meetings, and staff development sessions often come between English teachers and their reading; thus, we will attempt to provide an overview of Maslow's theories here.

Abraham H. Maslow studied and wrote innumerable articles, papers, and books during the decades that began during the depression and ended with his death in the late sixties. It was during the last decade of his life that his works became most popular.

Maslow's hierarchy of human needs, shown below, depicts five relatively distinct need levels through which every individual may travel.



Theoretically, until we fulfill our needs at the lower levels, we cannot

move to higher motivational levels. For example, if we have not met our basic needs, we will not be concerned by our lack of security. Similarly, until we are held in esteem and rewarded for the qualities which make us special, we will be unable to self-actualize. The concept of self-actualization, in particular, was most acceptable during the sixties, those years of free-wheeling ideas, infinite possibilities, and plentiful peak experiences.

Some reviewers claim Maslow was one of the foremost spokesmen for humanistic psychology. Others insist he was more philosopher than psychologist, a philosopher of science as it were.

The label is irrelevant; to a classroom teacher, he is a blessing. Though much written by Maslow found its way into our composition "course," it is with the hierarchy of human needs that we began. Thus, it is with the hierarchy, the triangular model, that we begin now. The model begins with the category of *basic* needs. Basic needs must be fulfilled for survival to continue. They include food, shelter, air, clothing, and other elements of very rudimentary living.

Since some may be unfamiliar with the ways basic, safety, belonging, ego and self-actualization needs might be behaviorally expressed, we will include in this discussion some well-known literary characters. They, we hope, can begin to exemplify the hierarchy of needs. Obviously, our character choices are based on our personal opinions, and since much of all character analysis is easily arguable in a number of directions, the characters are offered as possibilities for further thought, not as absolutes. Huck Finn's Pa in Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* or Oliver in Dickens' *Oliver Twist* seem to be ideal examples of basic-level characters.

Safety or *security* level needs are at Maslow's next rung on the motivational ladder. People in search of security want more than the mere survival of a life motivated by basic needs. Security may be translated into career or financial security or it may involve the security of a marriage or friendship. Again, literature can be helpful. Carrie, in Dreiser's *Sister Carrie,* for instance, risks happiness, morality, and genuine acceptance for the financial security inherent in her relationships, first with Drouet and later with Hurstwood. Other reasonable examples of fictional safety-level characters could include Pablo in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* or Mr. Moodie, Priscilla's father, in Hawthorne's *Blithedale Romance.*

When their basic and security needs are met, people seem to strive to *belong* and to be accepted by a larger circle of their peers. Adolescence is well-known as an age characterized by this need. Parents familiar with cries of "But, everybody's doing it!" need little further introduction to the belonging level in the hierarchy of needs. In our society,

unions, cocktail parties, fraternal organizations, and societies for the preservation of mutual interests meet the belonging/acceptance needs of their members. Politicians write letters to their constituents in an effort to preserve the family-like belongingness that prevailed earlier in this country's political history. In literature, Ellison's *Invisible Man* seems to represent man's need to belong, particularly during his association with the Brotherhood. Other characters who appear to be motivated, at times, by their need for peer acceptance and belonging are Drouet, again in *Sister Carrie,* who treasures any relationship regardless of its quality; Tom Sawyer, the master prankster, as he appears in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn;* and Jay Gatsby, in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby,* who spends a fortune in his effort to appear acceptable to a wider community.

At the *ego* or *esteem* level, people want recognition for their specific and special behaviors and qualities. As writers, they need to be published. As artists, they would like to sell their paintings, and as teachers, they would like to be recognized by their principals, department chairpersons, and system administrators for any uniquely proficient attributes. Meaningful rewards are the key to motivating the ego-level individual, and to be meaningful, a reward must be exceptional rather than standard. If, for example, the Mayor asks the opinion of everyone in a city, individual egos may suffer. On the other hand, if the opinions of a select few are requested, those egos will soar. Dr. Faustus seems to be an especially poignant ego-motivated character, and another Dreiser character, Hurstwood, is representative, in a somewhat negative sense, of the ego need level. Unlike self-actualizers who do not always need, seek, or enjoy flattery, prestige, money, or honors, Hurstwood is compelled to excel. In Dreiser's depiction, Hurstwood *must* manage everything: his club, his life, the lives of others. When circumstances change and Hurstwood is unable to be in charge, he sinks quickly to Maslow's *basic* level; he becomes a man who scavenges for food and shelter, in short, for his life.

The hierarchy of human needs culminates with the level of *self-actualization.* Though self-actualization sounds nearly mystical, it is not. There lives within each of us the potential self-actualizer capable of those intensely wonderful moments he called peak experiences. According to Maslow, (pp. 298-299) the self-actualizer

* fights against lies and evil
* tries to make things right
* both loves the world and his environment as it is, and, at the same time, tries to improve it
* is attracted by new, mysterious situations
* likes to find solutions to problems

* does not often need, or even enjoy, being flattered, loved or honored by everyone
* is internally, though not always externally, free
* automatically lifts the level of those with whom he comes in contact
* enjoys life and change, and is constantly curious about the world in which he resides and his place in its chaos

The self-actualizing character's or person's presence is both vital to and enriches the lives of his friends, colleagues, and family. The nearly mystical interpretation of self-actualization is probably due to the fact that the description could apply to our super-heroes: Batman, Superman, Wonder Woman, and the Hulk. We might fare better if we stopped to realize that those heroes of comic strip and television fame were created on the basis of the best that we, as human beings, have to offer.

Self-actualizers appear to have lower security, belonging, and ego needs than their lower level friends and relatives. Maslow claimed that children, who though dependent are most often freer than adults, have far more peak experiences, and are more self-actualizing than adults. A hundred or so years earlier, Thoreau said similarly, "Children, who play life, discern its true law and relations more clearly than men who fail to live it worthily." (*Walden,* Chapter II) Watching children feed ducks in a park or intently gaze at animals in a zoo, shriek wildly for joy on playgrounds, or meditate for moments on a single daisy is evidence that both Maslow and Thoreau were probably right.

As if to further verify the self-actualizing potential of children, Mark Twain produced Huckleberry Finn, perhaps the ultimate literary self-actualizer. He astounds the modern reader with his ability to live each moment to its fullest despite his lack of a comfy bed, three square meals a day, and the secure knowledge of what will happen next. Life with Jim, the run-away slave, on the raft is fulfilling to Huck, who tells the reader that it is just plain "lovely to live on a raft" with the stars and a friend for company.

Huck's description of a river-side daybreak may be particularly helpful to readers who would like to experience vicariously a peak experience in order to more fully understand the concept of self-actualization:

> The first thing to see, looking away over the water, was a kind of dull line...then a pale place in the sky...then the river softened up away off, and warn't black any more, but gray...and you see the mist curl up off of the water, and the east reddens up, and...then the nice breeze springs up, and comes fanning you from over there, so cool and fresh and sweet to smell on account of the woods and flowers; but sometimes not that way, because they've left dead fish

laying around, gars and such, and they do smell pretty rank; and next you've got the full day, and everything smiling in the sun, and the songbirds just going it! (Chapter XIX)

Amidst the reality of rank-smelling dead fish, Huck loses himself in the intrinsic value of that moment.

Huck is certainly not alone as an example of a self-actualizer. Joe Strzepek, at the University of Virginia, collected a list of more than thirty literary self-actualizers ranging from Zorba of Nikos Kazantzakis's *Zorba the Greek* to Jack Jefferson in the *Great White Hope.* (Strzepek, 1975) Any reader most certainly has his or her own favorites; ours include Saul Bellow's Augie March, and most recently, Tom Robbins's Bernard Mickey Wrangle in *Still Life With Woodpecker.*

Maslow suggested that self-actualization was similar to what Carl Rogers called the "fully functioning person," Jung, the "individuated person," and Fromm, an "autonomous person." More importantly, Maslow believed that the world needs more self-actualizing individuals. It is these people alone, he thought, who will be able to face creatively the changes that occur within families, communities, and nations. In other words, it will be the self-actualizers who will survive comfortably the world of Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock.*

Of particular interest to teachers is Maslow's plea that "every course help toward creativeness....Certainly," said Maslow, "this kind of education *of the person* should help create a better *type* of person, help a person grow bigger, taller, wiser, more perceptive—a person who, incidentally, would be more creative as matter of course in all departments of life." (p. 71) At the same time, he clearly stated that teachers, supervisors, and others in positions of authority cannot directly motivate their students, employees, or charges. What appears to be a somewhat contradictory message becomes more easily understandable when we recall that Maslow suggested that we motivate indirectly. Teachers, like supervisors or employers, can learn to recognize the need levels and desired goals of their students and then attempt to provide the necessary stimuli, or create situations in which the goals can be achieved; thus, it is possible for teachers to help their students move from one section of the motivational ladder to the next.

To be sure, no single individual or character is a perfect need-level type. Babies, obviously, are motivated by very basic needs, but by the time a child is five, he is usually more motivated by his security and safety needs. Young adolescents are noteworthy belongers and high school seniors are quite often motivated by their need for success and ego strokes. Prizes, scholarships, acceptance at the right colleges, or the promise of a good, first full-time job satisfy those ego needs. It is likely, however, that the first full-time job or the freshman year in a large

university will reduce the same recently ego-motivated person to a need for safety and security. Life has built-in situations that move us up and down Maslow's hierarchy of needs. New situations in any life produce new insecurities that must be overcome or handled in some fulfilling way before we can once again look for acceptance or success.

Literature, too, has need-level fluctuators. Macbeth, for example, is indubitably motivated by his ambition, yet those who argue that Lady Macbeth's influence is equally important have recognized that he needs to maintain her acceptance in order to play out his ambitious role. Holden Caulfield, in Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye,* has set himself apart from his peers, "the phonies," yet he needs desperately to belong.

The important thing to remember, for those of us who would like to become motivation magicians, is that people's needs change, growth is possible, and, as teachers, we are in a position to facilitate that growth.

To the reader who is tempted, at this point, to put this down, sigh twice, and write us a letter telling us we're ten years behind the times, let us say this: we, too, work for school systems that emphasize, in fact, demand that our students pass proficiency, competency, and standardized tests. The dream of educating every child to his fullest human potential reeks with the memories of open and often unproductive classrooms. Children milled about waiting for inspiration to hit. What would they choose to learn today? Or consider the alternative memory. Teachers looked at their thirty or one hundred-fifty potentially creative, though need-ridden, students and then tried to diagnose individually and prescribe for their academic problems as they kept each individual student's needs in mind. Whew!

As many teachers witnessed, children left to choose what to learn often choose nothing valued by society; consequently, what they choose does not appear on society's competency tests. Furthermore, teachers who have to individualize in the "learning center-diagnostic/prescriptive" sense are not humanly able to do so without a host of aids, machines, and devices, most of which are no longer available.

Is it possible, then, to meet our student's needs, encourage their creativity, maintain our own sanities, and stay within the limits of our school systems' budgets? Can we, as John Gardner once asked, "teach individuals at every level so that they realize their full potentialities, perform at their best, and harbor no resentment toward any other level?" (Gardner, 1961) We think, with Maslow's motivational theories as a framework, that the answer to Gardner's question is a strong "YES!"

Trying to sketch out a "basic" Maslow is risky business. Trying to write a monograph of methodology and teaching ideas that evolved from

reading Maslow without explaining to one's readers the basic motivational theories is even riskier. We opted for shaky security. Again, we suggest that the reader do some reading of Maslow. Meanwhile, we'll summarize what we think Maslow would say if he walked into our classrooms and we said, "Hey, will you teach our English classes for a few weeks? We want to emphasize writing."

Here is what we think might happen.

First, Maslow would help us find easy ways to begin to identify our students' needs and goals. Then, we feel, he would suggest that we learn to write our writing assignments so that the assignments themselves would begin to meet our students' needs. Next, he'd show us how to give students some choice about the way in which they learn. Students, we know, do profit from different kinds of instruction, but not the unmanageable hundred different kinds we tried a decade ago, just three or four. Finally, we think he would suggest that students be evaluated in different ways as well, ways designed to help them move to higher levels on the hierarchy of needs.

Before we explain how we have worked through each of those hypothetical suggestions during the last two years, we need to again caution our readers. Maslow, of course, can't walk into our classrooms because he's been dead for a number of years. We're tempted to underline every "we think" and "what if" in the preceding pages because we really don't know for certain how Maslow would teach composition in Room 101, or 123, or 234. To the best of our knowledge, Maslow never taught composition. Most of his educationally-oriented writing focuses on art and music and the ways in which more academic courses might inspire creativity as art and music courses often do. We have, at best, made some educated guesses.

On the other hand, educated guesses have always served sensitive teachers well. Once, after Title IX had passed and P.E. classes were forced to become co-ed, we asked a P.E. teacher how it was coming, having to teach girls and boys together. The rough, burly football coach's answer took us somewhat aback. "Ah, it's no different." No different? But how could that be? He was having to teach girls. He explained patiently that, since he had always had students of varying abilities, he had assigned in the past special positions and duties to players or students according to their talents, or lack thereof. We, staunch advocates of E.R.A. and dedicated professional teachers, did not want this reply. We wanted to know about all the difficulties of adjustment the male P.E. staff was having because they had, we thought, been such male chauvinists in the past. Instead, we learned something very basic about teaching from him.

Teachers teach what they have to teach the best way they can by

making adjustments to meet the varying abilities and needs of their children. The P.E. teacher had been teaching this way all along. Why, we wondered, were we walking into writing classrooms and making all our students jump the same rhetorical high jumps and run the identical research endurance runs, rewarding only those students who could win and punishing those who couldn't measure up? What works well with any class, we now know, is teacher sensitivity. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and theories of motivation provide a structure for and a way to discuss that sensitivity.

II

Which Students Need What?

After we assimilated the hierarchy of needs, the descriptions of each level, and Maslow's theories of motivation, the question we had to ask ourselves was this: How did our students behave in our classrooms as they faced writing assignments? And, since needs are often situational, would it be possible to identify those writing behaviors that indicated a student's writing-related need-level?

The answer has become a combined yes and no. Memorize this next sentence: *No student is a perfect anything.* For example, there is no student who always self-actualizes given any writing assignment and no student who clings at the security level despite a teacher's efforts. Real students, like most of those fictional characters, fluctuate from level to level. Needs can change with students' life situations, the task assigned, or the weather. So why bother with need level identification, someone might ask? The answer has to do with what is currently called "classroom management." It's difficult to plan and manage well without some idea of the kinds of writing-related needs students have. Some heterogeneously—grouped classes may include students at each of Maslow's need levels. Others may reflect a preponderance of esteem and self-actualization needs. The needs assessment tools and ideas which follow were designed for teachers who must, each September, start somewhere.

The ideal place to begin is with the sensitive and observant teacher. No matrix or fill-in-the-blank exercise will or should ever replace a good teacher's intuition. To bolster the reader's intuition quotient, we've invented some somewhat satirical, hypothetical students. Most teachers will recognize some of the student behaviors as typical of their own students, and, of course, they'll recognize that no student is quite as basic as our basic-level Cynthia or as insecure as Alfred, our invented insecurity. With those disclaimers, we present Tweeda Twerp's English class in Room 101.

TWEEDA TWERP'S STUDENTS

Tweeda Twerp teaches English in Somewhere, U.S.A. Within her heterogeneous first period class, all of Maslow's need levels are represented. Tweeda Twerp is not as insensitive as she may appear, but she teaches writing much as she was taught—with her well-worn copy of a grammar and composition handbook.

Cynthia, one of Tweeda's failures, always comes to class late; Cynthia either has no alarm clock or is too tired to hear its beckoning call. As usual, she also brings neither paper nor pen to class. Since Cynthia is always late, she is also always hungry. Oversleeping has many penalties, not the least of which is a lack of time for breakfast. Cynthia's stomach growls throughout most of the class; she sleeps during the rest. If Cynthia also speaks English as a second language, writes illegibly, or must spend great amounts of time trying to form letters, she will be very *Basic* indeed.

Cynthia may or may not have the skills necessary to write, and Ms. Twerp will never know for sure unless she can find ways to meet Cynthia's basic-level needs. (Cynthia is very basic, but there is at least partial hope. We'll return to her later. In the next section, we'll specifically suggest some ways to fulfill Cynthia's and her classmates' needs.)

Every Thursday is composition day in Tweeda Twerp's classroom. Today is Thursday: poor *Alfred* forgot and came to class anyway. Years of frustration and failure have taught him to avoid writing whenever possible. He is intimidated by the task; he doesn't know how to spell, and he is often unable to locate words in his dictionary. Alfred used to ask for help. Once when he really wanted to finish an assignment—it was a letter to the local newspaper editor about an issue that Alfred cared about—he raised his hand, hollered for Ms. Twerp, and finally followed her about the room begging for assistance. The beleaguered Ms. Twerp turned to Alfred and screamed, "*Sit down, Alfred.* I have thirty-one other students in this class. What makes you think I can spend all of my time with you? Can't you do anything by yourself?"

As we said, poor Alfred, because when it comes to writing, Alfred truly cannot do much by himself. In other classes Alfred sometimes did try to write by himself. He was, like many insecure writers, rewarded for his efforts with *F*s and a seemingly meaningless slew of annotations like *awk, colloq, no T.S., frag., R.O.* and *p.* Alfred, not surprisingly, now focuses his writing attention on mechanical and grammatical correctness. He diligently copies lists of transitional devices, subordinate conjunctions, and sentence starters, but he is never sure how, where, or why he might use his lists.

Alfred, if given a choice of writing assignments, will continue to choose "none of the above" until Ms. Twerp can begin to change both her approach and Alfred's self-image. Then Alfred, too, may learn to write. Until then, Alfred will remain the almost perfect *Safety*-level student-writer.

Three desks over from Alfred sit *Sarah, Bonnie, John,* and *Joe.* While Ms. Twerp is explaining the day's writing assignment, Sarah and friends are deeply involved in an impromptu planning session for an upcoming class picnic. Thus far, they've produced a list of needed supplies, divided the food preparation tasks, and devised a sign-up sheet for soliciting the help of other classmates. When Ms. Twerp says, "All right, class, now you may begin," Sarah, Bonnie, John, and Joe stare open-mouthed at Ms. Twerp and finally Bonnie peeps, "Begin what?"

We leave to the reader's imagination the reply of Tweeda Twerp and the equally unproductive comments of her adolescent friends. What is more important is this: Sarah and company are representative of most middle and secondary-school students. They have perfected the *Belonging* level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. Furthermore, they are inordinately productive when allowed to work with each other. None alone could have produced the sign-up sheet, list of supplies, and food preparation assignments. Together, they accomplished everything on their personal agendas. If Tweeda Twerp wants these students to write, she might consider ways to utilize rather than deny their need for peer acceptance.

Edward and *Lisa* sit near the front of the classroom. They like to be seen. As a matter of fact, they both strive for ways to stand out in their crowd. Edward is a good student, gets *A*'s and *B*'s in all of his school subjects, and is on the first string of his school's football team. Lisa is a budding actress, spends hours memorizing lines, and has been cast, after weeks of preparation for the audition, as a star in her school's annual play. Neither Edward nor Lisa see much value in Ms. Twerp's assignment. They know, with certainty, that the assignment is easy and that it will get done.

Edward mentally calculates the effort needed to get his usual *A* and plans to write his essay during the fifteen minutes between his sixth-period class and the beginning of football practice. Lisa ponders a moment, almost begins to write, and then remembers: even if she sits right there in full view of Ms. Twerp and the world writing with all her heart and soul, neither Twerp nor the world will know. She, too, will get a good grade and . . . and no one will care or know how good the paper really is. Neither Lisa nor Edward have the opportunity to be rewarded meaningfully in Ms. Twerp's class, and both already write relatively well. The problem is that both students might write very well, even exceptionally well, if they foresaw the possibility of relevant writing rewards. Thus

far, they do not.

Not all students in need of esteem will necessarily respond to the same rewards that Edward and Lisa seem to crave. Some students are more comfortable with private rewards, while others, like our examples, want public acclaim. If Ms. Twerp is sensitive, she will be able to make intelligent decisions about the kind and quality of reward necessary to motivate her *Ego*-level students' writing growth.

As Ms. Twerp gives the assignment directions on this particular Thursday, *Melissa* reacts with little interest. Melissa, instead, is intent on the scene outside. It is raining. The splashes, the thunder, a bolt of lightning all remind Melissa of a poem she has tried to write. Fifteen revisions ago, she liked the idea. Now she is no longer sure. She would like some help with the poem, but she remembers when she once asked Ms. Twerp for help with the ending of a short story. Ms. Twerp refused. "Melissa, when you finish *my* assignment, I'll try to find time to look at your little project." Melissa didn't finish her five-paragraph composition; Ms. Twerp never saw the short story. And, sighs Melissa, I guess she won't see this poem, either.

Melissa is an enigma to both her teachers and her parents. She's bright, but. . . . She likes to write, but. . . . She doesn't work to her ability. She often doesn't do assigned work at all. She has at varying times been labelled a daydreamer, slow and in need of remediation, and insubordinate. Melissa keeps a personal journal and writes for pleasure whenever she can steal the needed moments. Melissa especially likes to share her writing with a neighbor who also writes and with her math teacher who is, in the words of Melissa's classmates, "a real wierdo, a closet poet."

We think Melissa is a potential *Self-Actualizer*. Because she is quiet, she's been labelled rather politely with words like "slow" and "daydreamer." On the other hand, others who have self-actualizing needs may also be classified as below average or worse when they act out their frustrations in more deviant ways. For every Melissa, there are probably three Michaels who spend their time in in-school suspension, in the pool hall, or in some deserted barn. Ms. Twerp's attempts to teach writing to a non-existent "average" child negate the self-actualizing child's enthusiasm and growth just as it cheats the safety, belonging, and ego-needs students.

The trouble with hypothetical kids is that they may too closely resemble real students. Exaggeration aside, the inventions are closely allied to dozens of students we've taught, and Cynthia, Alfred, Sarah, and the rest of the gang will probably strike a remembering spark in every English teacher who reads these words. The important message, for the time being, is this: Teachers familiar with Maslow's hierarchy of

needs and the ways these needs may be acted out in a classroom where writing is taught have a basis for adapting instruction to student needs. Teachers are, by far, best able to identify their own students' needs. They alone can recognize that some students function on one need level for one task, but on an entirely different one for another. They can be sensitive to changing and growing needs and be willing to alter their instructional tactics to facilitate their students' growth. They can, finally, have as an ultimate goal, the nurturing of their students toward productive self-actualization.

We strongly suggest that all teachers begin to trust their intuition. Then, if it seems worthwhile to see how intuition matches with paper-and-pencil needs-assessment tools, give our matrices (below) a try. They're easy to use, recently revised, and some amount of fun for students. Be careful, though. The wording we chose on the east coast in our school systems may have little relevance to the Hispanic or Indian or Chicano students in other school systems. Since needs can change with situations, some teachers might do well to design their own matrices. Meanwhile, we'll explain how these evolved.

WRITING GRIPES

Our writing gripes matrix evolved for two very specific reasons. One: Maslow asserts that listening to one's gripes is one of the best ways to ascertain what his needs are, and two: during our combined twenty-plus years of classroom experience we had heard sufficient writing-related gripes to fill a dozen matrices.

To be honest, Maslow suggests a number of ways to determine individual need levels. One particularly fascinating method is based on an individual's sense of humor. According to Maslow, people who laugh at hostile or aggressive humor—for example, the literally head-splitting humor often found in "Snuffy Smith" or "Andy Capp"—are usually operating from one of the lower levels on the hierarchy of needs. Some additional thought leads us to surmise that, perhaps, the slapstick humor of the Three Stooges, Laurel and Hardy, and the Keystone Cops evolved because of the need-creating crises of the times: two world wars and a depression.

But back to the classroom. If Maslow is correct, then we might theorize that our students at the basic and safety levels would laugh loudest as fellow classmates sit on tacks, stick to chewing gum, or stumble and fall. On the other hand, people who appreciate what Maslow refers to as Abraham Lincoln humor—for example, the philosophical witticisms of Ben Franklin or the verbal word-play of Oscar Wilde—probably have upper-level needs. Enchanting as the idea seemed, we felt inept when it came to designing matrices filled with cartoon characters, jokes, philosophical irony and subtle satire. Maybe that can come later.

Maslow's second suggestion involves the use of psychologically sound projective tests like the familiar Rorschach (Ink Blot) test. Again neither our credentials, our finances, nor our ethics could allow for the wholesale testing of our high school students. Not only do we lack the expertise to interpret standard psychological tests, we, as English teachers, really have no right to delve that deeply into our students' psyches. Thus, leaving jokes and analysis behind, we opted for the world of gripes.

Maslow actually uses the word *grumbles* and writes, at length, about grumbles, high grumbles, and metagrumbles. Low grumbles are spouted by one who is motivated by his basic and safety needs. Workers, for instance, who work in unclean and unsafe buildings, who might be laid off at any time, or who work long hours for little pay will probably have low grumbles. High grumbles usually indicate strong belonging and ego needs. Workers without a union or professional association and workers who feel that they have little chance for advancement have high grumbles. Metagrumbels are based on the metaneeds of the self-actualizing person. Metagrumbles include complaints about injustice and unrecognized virtue.

When we designed the matrix, we tentatively categorized previous students and mentally listened to their voices as they griped and complained their way through writing assignments. Then we began to categorize the gripes themselves. The matrix has since been through a number of revisions, yet it is still far from perfect. One continuing problem is our inability to find five gripes attractive to self-actualizing students. Many students, particularly those in Advanced Placement English classes, have difficulty finding any gripes that suit. As one student said, "I like to write. Why would I gripe about it?" We finally hit on one temporary solution to the problem. When students insist that none of the gripes fit, we ask them to list on the back of the matrix anything that has ever bothered them about writing, writing situations, or writing assignments. Usually they respond with some word or two that provides us with additional insight.

Directions for Use

Ask students to place a large "X" over the five gripes that most closely express their own silent or spoken complaints about school-related writing. If the students read poorly, read the gripes aloud slowly and allow time for students to contemplate the choices.

Scoring

The diagonal row of boxes from the upper left corner to the lower right corner (numbers 1, 7, 13, 19, and 25) are responses that indicate a strong need for belonging, sharing, and peer support.

The triangle to the left of that diagonal contains both basic and safety level gripes (basic-numbers 6, 12, 18, 22, and 24; safety-numbers 11, 16, 17, 21, and 23).

The triangle on the right of the diagonal has complaints vocalized as a result of the need for ego reward and the need to self-actualize (ego-numbers 2, 4, 8, 14, and 21; self-actualization-numbers 3, 5, 9, 10, and 15).

WRITING GRIPES

1. If I'm going to write, it has to be something that will be read and answered, like a note or a letter.	2. Writing makes me feel bad. I put lots of work into a paper and all I get is a grade.	3. I wouldn't mind writing if I got to write the things I want to write.	4. It's dumb to write for a class. Real writing, for a newspaper or a magazine, would be better.	5. Why should I write only what my teacher tells me to write? I want to create a story or a poem.
6. I never have paper or a pen. If teachers want me to write, they must give me the things I need.	7. If we could work in groups and write together, I'd like to write. I don't like to sit by myself and write.	8. The thing that makes me mad is I have to write and no one sees it except my teacher. I want others to see what I can do.	9. I like to write when I choose to, but I hate to write at school or on school assignments.	10. I like to write. In fact, I get so involved that I am lost in my writing, but at school, I'm not allowed to get that involved.
11. I don't like to write because no one will help me start.	12. How can anyone be expected to write in a classroom? It's dirty, noisy, and crowded.	13. Writing for a teacher is stupid. I want to share my ideas and writing with my friends.	14. I'd write more but no one appreciates it. I'd rather spend my time doing something worthwhile.	15. Teachers are so unfair. They only accept writing they like and agree with.
16. They tell me to use a dictionary and grammar book, but I'm not able to find the right word or page.	17. I can't spell or punctuate. It would be better if I learned that first, then I could write.	18. Teachers want me to use a dictionary. If I had one, I'd use it. Why aren't there enough here?	19. I don't like to write by myself. I need to be with a group of people before I can do my best.	20. Writing is useless. I need to spend my time doing something that lets people really notice me.
21. I can't write if I don't know what to do. A teacher should show me how!	22. Teachers say they can't read my handwriting. It is silly to write if no one can read it.	23. I hate being told to write a composition about anything I choose. I want good directions and a good assignment.	24. I can't write because I'm always too tired or hungry.	25. I get mad when I have to be quiet. How can I write if I can't share my ideas with a friend first?

Caution

Few students have ever chosen five consistent gripes on one level. They do, however, tend to choose gripes within a certain area. It is not uncommon to find students with a predominance of belonging and ego needs or a high concentration of safety and belonging needs. We would advise that teachers who choose to experiment with this matrix use the results only as a way to plan for the breadth needed in their assignments and instruction and not as a way to label any one student.

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WHY WRITE?

We felt that the reasons students would want to write would reflect both the composition skills they had previously mastered and those which the students perceived as necessary for future educational and/or career goals. Thus responses elicited on this matrix could help with planning future writing assignments and instruction. Originally we felt that the results of this matrix would correlate with those ascertained on the Writing Gripes matrix, and we were right. Students who appear to have, for example, safety-level gripes also usually want to write for safety-level, need-generated reasons.

WHY WRITE?

1. To record announcements and minutes for a club or group you belong to.	2. To enter writing contests.	3. To help you make decisions about what you have read or heard.	4. To develop yourself as the kind of writer that you want to be.	5. To help you find happiness expressing your thoughts.
6. To do as well as your friends do in school.	7. To express your opinions, such as in a letter to an editor, teacher, or principal.	8. To give effective speeches.	9. To keep track of your thoughts and feelings in a diary or journal.	10. To improve your own writing style.
11. To pass written assignments given in class.	12. To work with others on group projects and reports.	13. To correspond with your family or friends to tell them what is happening to you.	14. To present your views to others to convince them that you are right.	15. To experiment with new ways of expressing your ideas.
16. To describe something, such as a party or an accident.	17. To copy your favorite song lyrics, poems, sayings, etc.	18. To explain to someone how to do or make something.	19. To show that you can do better work than others in your class.	20. To see your name and works in print.
21. To take a message for someone.	22. To fill out forms.	23. To give directions on how to get from one place to another.	24. To help someone else with a problem.	25. To entertain other people.

Directions for Use

Students should place a large "X" over the five reasons that explain why they believe they need to learn how to write. Students should be given sufficient time to consider carefully all of the choices before marking any.

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Scoring

The boxes in the lower left-hand corner (numbers 11, 16, 17, 21, 22, and 23) represent the safety-level students' perceptions of the reasons for school-related writing. Students on the belonging-level most frequently respond to boxes 1, 6, 12, 18, 24, and 25. On the other hand, ego need-level students tend to mark boxes numbered 2, 7, 8, 14, 19, and 20, and students on the self-actualizing-level most frequently respond to those numbered 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, and 15. The center box, number 13, could be labelled "free," since it is the one most often chosen by all level students. Notice that none of the boxes is normally chosen by students with truly basic needs. Basic-need students usually see no reason for writing at all.

Caution

Again, this matrix should not be used to label or diagnose student needs. A teacher can, however, use it to determine what writing skills students view as realistic for themselves. The choices will usually reflect the skills they have already mastered as well as those they would like to master. This matrix, like the Writing Gripes matrix, is most useful early in the school year as a planning tool.

MY COMPOSING PROCESS

This needs assessment tool does not even attempt to measure need levels; it does, however, elicit specific writing needs. We include it here because it has been particularly helpful in planning the kind of instruction that best suits individual needs.

Directions for Use

Students are normally both willing and eager to complete the sentences. Ask them to answer as quickly as possible; usually ten to fifteen minutes is enough time for eliciting honest responses. When given more time, students have the opportunity to over-think, thereby responding more "acceptably" and less honestly.

A Final Note of Caution

We have had the good fortune to travel with our Maslow-based ideas to a number of NCTE-sponsored conferences. During our presentations we have shared the matrices and tried verbally to insure that the matrices and the sentence completion form be used only as guides to need level identification. We have hoped that other teachers might experiment with the needs assessment tools and yet we are constantly afraid that someone might use the student results to label the students. That seems, to us, a mistake since we who made these matrices are very

MY COMPOSING PROCESS

1. Before I can write well, I need _____
2. When I have to write a composition, I feel _____
3. I like to write about _____
   but not about _____
4. When I am writing an assignment for school, I _____
5. I know I could be a better writer if _____
6. When I am writing, I need my teacher _____
7. Writing is fun _____
8. The thing I am most worried about as I write is _____
9. If my teacher asks me to write an assignment that will be due in two weeks, I will begin _____
10. The best place for writing is _____
11. I revise and edit my writing when _____
12. I'm not a very good writer if _____
13. When I am writing, I think about _____
14. When I get a poor grade on my composition, I _____
15. I want my teacher to make corrections and suggestions for improving my writing, but _____
16. If I avoid all writing _____
17. It's hard to write at school because _____
18. I wish my teacher would _____
    _____ when I am writing.
19. When my teacher returns my graded paper and it has a lot of corrections and comments, I feel _____
20. If a person wants to be a better writer, he or she should
    _____
    _____

much aware of their imperfections. We would be horrified if we thought hundreds of youngsters might wind up roaming their high school halls saying, "Hey! So you're only a safety, huh. Well, I'm at the ego level." Students, it would seem, have plenty of names for each other without our providing them with five new ones. Finally, no paper and pencil tool is ever as sound as the classroom teacher's intuition. Use these tools if you like, or preferably, create your own, but continue to trust your instincts. Only you know your own students.

III

Some General Motivational Strategies

When we attend workshops and conferences, devour each copy of *English Journal,* and/or participate in a writing methods course, it is easy to be confused by the current plethora of writing instructional strategies. The biggest bonus inherent in the use of Maslow's motivational theories as a basis for composition instruction is that suddenly all of the possible strategies, techniques, and tricks begin to sort themselves out and make sense. It is likely that every technique ever invented, written, or shared is perfect—for some students.

The real trick to teaching composition successfully seems to lie in matching the right instructional strategy with the right students. Peer revision and editing activities, for instance, are perfect for some students yet fail miserably with others. Similarly, sentence combining may be a boon to Mattie, Jess, Jake, and Sue while it lulls the rest of the class to sleep. All of which seems perfectly normal when we remember that our students learn in a variety of ways.

One other thought seems worth sharing before we move to some specific need-oriented teaching ideas. Abraham Maslow was not inconsistent with other psychologists. Beery and Covington, two educational psychologists, stress in *Self Worth and School Learning* the importance of creating success-oriented learning structures. The directive begins to make sense when we remember that the traditional school orientation allows some students to have self-worth only if other students are unworthy. As an example, consider our traditional grading systems, including the bell curve, which deems that success always be balanced by failure. If we see the growth of each student as our primary goal, then this orientation comes close to the ridiculous. When students are not forced to compete directly, suggest Beery, Covington, and others, they set goals slightly beyond their current level of achievement: they learn more; they feel more successful; they are motivated to strive for further success.

Perhaps the best way to restructure a composition course would be to eliminate between-student competition. A program of diversified assignments, instruction, and evaluation does just that. What we propose in the remainder of this monograph will encourage rather than discourage different kinds of success. We also recommend that students be allowed to assess their own needs and choose assignments, instructional strategies, and grading systems that meet their needs. A number of studies have shown the importance of realistic self-appraisal. We too have found that students who are provided with alternatives for success begin to see themselves as successful. When Alfred Alschuler, to name one of many, conducted a research study with math students, students who were allowed to set their own goals made dramatic mathematical gains; math achievement rose three grade levels during a single year. Again, we cite this study not to suggest that we all return to the problem-ridden era of individualization, but rather to suggest the importance of retaining some elements of that era in our classrooms.

When we began the process of relating Maslow to the teaching of writing, we followed our instincts. For two years we tested, revised, and expanded our theories. In the last six months we've spent a considerable amount of time reading the literature of educational psychology. Without attempting to recount all that we have read, it seems important to note that there is much there that supports our original hunches. The reader who would like to assess our experiences, ideas, and proposals with great seriousness might begin by reading carefully the books and articles listed in the bibliography.

But back to Cynthia and the rest of our fictional gang. What do we do with them? Can Cynthia become a safety-level student? Can we turn the energies of Sarah, Bonnie, John, and Joe into productive, teacher-blessed writing? Are there relevant writing rewards for Edward and Lisa? If Maslow came to Room 101, what would he do? Which strategies meet the needs of which students, and how can one teacher meet all of his or her students' needs?

It would be lovely to suggest that the answers are simple. They are not. Neither are they impossible. With a second look at Cynthia and her friends, we can begin to shed light on the motivational possibilities available.

COPING WITH BASIC-LEVEL NEEDS

Cynthia, if you recall, was at the basic level. As we said earlier, Cynthia may or may not have the skills needed for school-related writing and unless her teacher can begin to meet those basic needs, it's unlikely that Cynthia will do any writing. If she suffers from poverty-induced hunger and fatigue, there is little that Tweeda Twerp or any teacher can

do beyond making an appropriate referral to another social agency. Unfortunately, many of us teach students whose living or home situations make all instruction difficult.

On the other hand, if Cynthia has basic writing-related needs, there is much the classroom teacher might do. If, for instance, Cynthia cannot write because she never has paper or a pen, Ms. Twerp could provide them. It is possible that she cannot afford her own writing materials. Since most schools have extra paper, pencils, and pens on hand, it should be easy to supply what she needs. Of course, it is equally possible that Cynthia lacks writing materials because she is irresponsible. Then the question becomes: Does she forget her paper and pen so she can avoid writing? If the answer is "yes," we suggest that Ms. Twerp give Cynthia the necessary equipment and, at the same time, begin to watch her closely in order to determine why she purposely creates a situation guaranteed to produce failure. If the answer is "no," if she forgets paper and pen just as she forgets everything else, then, although we still suggest giving Cynthia the supplies, we also suggest trying some technique—perhaps a form of behavior modification—that promises to change her irresponsible behavior.

As we suggested in Cynthia's character sketch, any number of problems may be at the basis of her basic-level behavior. If her problems are physical, she can't write legibly or she spends inordinately long periods of time producing legible writing, a typewriter might be what's needed to nudge her toward the next level. Even hunting and pecking for the correct keys can result in more writing for the student who is physically unable to write.

Foreign students who are new to the United States are most likely at the basic level. We know that if we were asked to write these words in German or Greek, we probably would not write until we learned to speak German or Greek. Our writing time might be better spent talking about the subject and then writing in the language with which we were most comfortable. Then it might be possible to translate our writing into the required language. Teachers well-trained in the teaching of English as a second language can, no doubt, shed much light on this basic-level possibility. In summary, whatever our students' basic needs might be, we have learned that unless they are in some way met, those students will not write. If your students all complete their writing assignments, then it is probable that they have already reached a higher level.

SATISFYING SAFETY-LEVEL NEEDS

Safety-level students like Alfred need more guidance, support, structure, assistance, and honest praise than other students. Alfred hates to write because he is afraid to write. Alfred will probably begin to relax

if he has the opportunity to write frequently without accompanying apprehension. Although we both ask all of our students to keep journals, it is students like Alfred who seem to profit most. It seems reasonable, though unproven, that writing frequency must precede writing security. And it seems equally probable that some amount of writing security is necessary before the further skill acquisition that leads to writing fluency can take place.

Readers familiar with Lawrence Kohlberg's stages of moral development will most likely note the similarity between Alfred's safety-level needs and Kohlberg's stage known as the "obedience-punishment position." Alfred writes because he knows he will be punished with failure if he does not; unfortunately, the Alfreds of the world most often fail anyway when they are taught with traditional instructional and evaluative methods. Safety-level students need to know that success is possible. Since there are any number of alternatives for adding to the success quotient, we suggest using any or all that seem appropriate, given system demands, teacher sensibilities, student needs, and parental desires.

If it were possible to hold Alfred's hand, let him talk as he wrote, spell words as he needed them, guide his punctuation, and answer all his questions as they occurred, Alfred's writing would show immediate and marked improvement. Obviously, that kind of tutorial instruction is seldom possible within a high school classroom; thus, it becomes necessary to find other alternatives to promote safety.

If Ms. Twerp were sensitive to Alfred's needs, she would modify her instructional techniques to address them. For example, although she has always believed that student spelling is improved only if students look up their own words, she will begin to spell the words that Alfred needs to know when she realizes that the time he spends with his dictionary is time lost on his assignment. She will also encourage Alfred to freewrite, or write out his thoughts from beginning to end before he tries to revise and edit his writing. Safety-level students have the notion, probably gleaned from the marks and annotative comments on their previously evaluated papers, that good writing can be reduced to margins of the proper width, a well-centered title, neat handwriting, and mechanical and grammatical correctness. This concern for appearances, however, often precludes significant writing improvement. One of the greatest joys for those of us who are secure writers is the possibility of discovering something we weren't aware we thought. If Alfred's writing experiences can be structured to allow the possibility of discovery, his attitude about writing may begin to change. He will emphasize originality of thought rather than mere correctness, and his teacher will be happier, too.

Suppose, however, that Ms. Twerp is genuinely concerned about Alfred's mechanical and grammatical problems. Should she ignore those flaws in order to promote fluency? Probably not. Alfred needs self-paced instruction aimed at his mastery of one skill before he is asked to learn another. It seems reasonable to suggest that the self-paced instruction be based on Alfred's writing needs. If his last essay was a single sentence beginning with a capital letter at the top of the page and ending with a period in the lower right-hand corner, Alfred could begin with exercises to correct his run-on sentence problem. It might, for instance, be helpful to ask him to make sure his sentences have no more than eight to ten words. Or perhaps Alfred might profit from reading his writing backwards, one sentence at a time beginning with the last period and going to the closest visible capital letter. Even an Alfred can learn to spot run-on sentences with that simple technique. Whatever Alfred's problems and Ms. Twerp's solutions, he should be allowed to solve one problem before he is asked to tackle another. In addition, we strongly suggest that he not be evaluated on skills he has not yet had the opportunity to practice.

The question of evaluation arouses the greatest debate among teachers. We have tried a number of options, each with some success. The principle to keep in mind with safety-level students is this: they need our help, not our judgments. Traditional grading, or the marking of every error, is usually counterproductive with these students. On the other hand, give-away *A*'s probably won't help either if the students don't respect their own work. Somewhere in between fall these grading possibilities:

Incremental Grading:

Instead of subtracting points for errors, add points for previously determined characteristics. For example, a student might receive fifty points for doing the assignment, ten points for including a topic sentence or thesis statement, additional points for spelling or punctuation proficiency, and extra points for any recently studied skills. The point system could be determined by the type of assignment as well as the individual student's needs.

The Super-Effort Grade:

Although many educational psychologists would dispute this method, we have had some measurable success with rewarding time spent on a writing activity with a high grade. The system has been most effective with students who previously did no writing. Since many safety-level students fail when they write, they often choose to fail effortlessly by not writing at all. We, on occasion, have told students they would receive *A*'s if they completed an assignment

and *F*s if they did not. It worked. They began to complete and turn in all of their assignments. Since the positive effects of this effort-based grading system are usually felt quickly, we wouldn't recommend using the system for protracted periods of time.

Specific Skill Evaluation:

With this method, the teacher focuses on the one or two skills the student has been asked to improve. If, for example, the student has a serious case of comma confusion, the teacher could elect to grade only on the basis of his correct comma usage. Or if another student limits herself to extremely short, boring simple sentences, the teacher might provide sentence-combining practice and then evaluate the next piece of original writing by counting the number of compound and complex sentences.

Whichever method a teacher chooses, it should be one that promotes rather than retards growth, one that increases chance for success rather than guarantees failure. Safety-level students can learn to write well if the classroom becomes a secure place for writing; the instruction and evaluation ideas described here are ways that we have found to increase that sense of security.

MEETING BELONGING-LEVEL NEEDS

Sarah, Bonnie, John, and Joe are representative adolescents. Most educators and psychologists believe that adolescence, particularly early adolescence, is a life stage fraught with the desire to belong to a group and to respond to peer rather than adult pressure. What is believed in theory, however, is seldom used as a basis for classroom instruction. After our bout with individualization, many of us were told to group our students. Most of us, though, were never told how this magical combining of students might be accomplished. Neither were we told how grouping would facilitate student learning or teacher instruction. Maslow, for us, was the beginning of a new look at possible grouping methods. As a result, we have developed writing-group strategies that seem to work well.

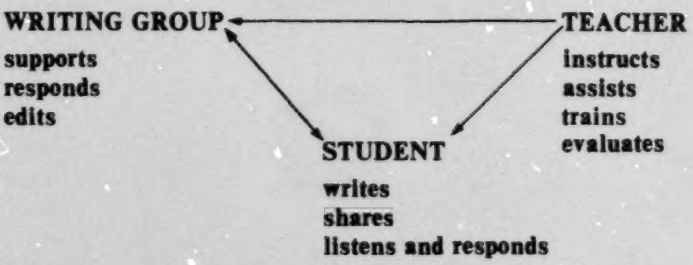
Strategy One

The teacher can divide students into heterogeneous groups. Each group should be comprised of four to six students with varying cognitive abilities. A balance of races and sexes is helpful as well.

Each writing group functions primarily as a support group. Members serve as an immediate audience and provide editorial help and instant response. At a later time, they can begin to share in the process of formal evaluation.

The teacher continues to give all initial instruction and most likely provides ongoing assistance during the students' composing process. In addition, a significant amount of time should be spent training students to give non-judgmental, though critical, informed response. Until the group is able to aid in the actual grading of a paper, the teacher remains the ultimate evaluator. In time, this task can be shared with the writing group.

The following diagram illustrates the three-way interaction shared by teacher, student, and writing group:



Strategy Two

This is a derivation of the Student-Team Learning strategy devised and tested at Johns Hopkins University by Robert E. Slavin and J. Richard Lewis. Slavin and Lewis outline group strategies for the mechanics of writing, but do not address the composing process in its entirety.

Again, the teacher divides a class into racially and sexually mixed groups of four to six students. Each group should be as heterogeneous as the class and include students who write well, students who are less proficient, and students who are ill at ease with their writing. The group process can be divided into eight distinct steps:

1. The group meets for prewriting activity. This could include the sharing of ideas, experiences, or subject knowledge. When applicable, the group could share in research needed for a paper.
2. The group splits up. Each student fulfills the writing assignment. This step could take place in the classroom or at home.
3. Pairs of students meet to revise, edit, and proofread.
4. The group reconvenes. Each member reads his composition to the group.
5. The group, as audience, provides immediate response. The quality of this response will improve with teacher training and group maturity.

6. Individuals again revise and recopy their compositions. Final copies are submitted to the teacher for evaluation.
7. The teacher evaluates individual papers. As the group's ability to evaluate grows, they may share their opinions.
8. The group is evaluated as a whole. This evaluation can be based on an average of the individual grades or it can reflect the quality of the group's interaction. Each group is then ranked competitively with other class writing groups. In this way the enthusiasm often found in competition remains; the possibility of individual defeat is minimized.

Improvised variations of either strategy will work as well. Depending on student needs, available classtime, and teacher priorities, groups may have as few as two students or as many as seven or eight. Groups may change with each assignment or they may, after some experimentation, become permanent writing groups for a semester or a year. The best thing about grouping, whatever the method, is that it begins to turn the noise and excitement of friendship into productive writing, and once teachers share the roles of helper, supporter, editor, and occasionally even evaluator with students, they have more time to spend with students who need one-on-one guidance.

Successful grouping requires an enormous amount of careful planning and an equal amount of patience, but it can begin to solve the problems of most students. When, for example, Sarah, Bonnie, John, and Joe begin to help each other, Ms. Twerp will have the time she needs for Alfred and Cynthia. Grouping may help everyone be more successful.

MEETING EGO-LEVEL STUDENTS' NEEDS

Most ego-level students have a writing ability that matches their need level; thus, the ego-level students with whom we've worked most closely have been relatively skilled writers. The suggestions that follow should work well for the skilled-yet-uninterested student-writer. Occasionally, though, a student may have strong ego needs but very weak writing skills. That student will be best motivated if the attention normally reserved for safety-level students is combined, somehow, with an opportunity to receive meaningful acclaim. That may not be as difficult as it seems since attention itself feeds many egos. Edward and Lisa, the fictional ego-level students, are fairly typical. Writing for Tweeda Twerp does little to enhance either their public or private images; consequently, they invest little of themselves in her task; without a great deal of personal investment, the writing of neither student is likely to improve. What Tweeda needs to discover is the kind of pay-off likely to inspire their vested interest.

Since Lisa and Edward seem to enjoy the publicity that accompanies stardom, Ms. Twerp might consider the possibilities for publicity that come with being published. Perhaps both students would be more motivated if they thought their writing could actually be submitted to a publication, whether it be a letter to the editor of the local newspaper or an essay likely to win first prize in a civic organization contest.

Even need levels may be somewhat stratified, so ego-level students may be content to see their writing published within the classroom. The inventor of the classroom bulletin board was way ahead of most of us; we suspect he or she knew of its publication possibilities while the rest of us were still displaying falling leaves in autumn and showers and flowers in the spring. Professional journals teem with suggestions for producing other classroom publications. Class news, collections of poetry, tidbits from student journals, or group stories can all be mimeographed or dittoed and distributed without a lot of money. And as these publications fulfill the ego-level students' needs, they will serve equally well as public relations pieces to be shared with parents, community organizations, and administrators. As teachers find ways to meet ego needs, everyone begins to win.

SOLVING SELF-ACTUALIZATION PROBLEMS

We almost didn't write this section in order to highlight the best we, as teachers, can do for our self-actualizing students. They will be most motivated if left alone. Melissa, as you may recall, writes without being told to write. She writes stories and poems, and she is more than willing to share her writing with fellow writers. Though Melissa was absorbed in her personal writing, Ms. Twerp, who wanted Melissa to be like others, thought she was inattentive. We have found that what Melissa needs most is freedom: freedom to write what she chooses, for as long as she chooses, in the style, voice, and form that she chooses.

Melissa is both the easiest and the most difficult student to teach. We once heard that the most difficult part of parenting is the gradual "letting-go" that must take place if a child is to be free to mature. Teachers face a similar problem with self-actualizing students who, if they are to be productive, must be allowed to follow their own leads and, at times, suffer their failures.

We learned another lesson, most applicable to self-actualizing students though pertinent to others as well, from an art teacher. After all, writing and painting as creative acts are basically alike. Teachers can teach students how to draw lines and how to construct sentences. They can show students how to mix colors and how to recognize informal, formal, figurative, and colloquial styles. The one thing they cannot do is show the student how to produce a painting or an essay that works

perfectly—that is a great piece of art or prose. Only practice and experimentation result in polished creativity. Self-exploration and failure are necessary steps along the way. Artists and art teachers seem to recognize this truth more frequently than writing teachers. Artists and art teachers seem to see that there is a bit of magic that makes a picture click and that the magic is a serendipitous proposition at best. We writing teachers, on the other hand, show students how to construct a five-paragraph paper, put in the proper transitions, stick in a few of this week's vocabulary words, and eureka, the perfect paper—but sadly, not so. Sometimes we aren't willing to let our students experiment and fail. Perhaps we think it reflects our failure when, in fact, it reflects our students' growth.

Melissa needs a writing teacher who views writing as an art, a teacher willing to let her experiment, grow, and sometimes fail. With the freedom to choose, improvise, and share as she desires, Melissa can become the self-motivated writer she really is.

IV

Making Assignments that Meet Student Needs

Because we assume that basic-level students do little, if any, writing, we began structuring assignments for students on the safety level.

Remember that safety-level students are generally threatened by writing. In order to lessen this fear, the classroom should be a safe, non-threatening environment, and the student's schedule, a predictable routine. Surprises should be minimal; undue stress minimized; and embarrassment prevented. In addition, safety-level students need definite structure throughout the writing process. For example, they need detailed prewriting activities and ongoing guidance from the teacher. They need to know how an assignment will be evaluated before they begin to write. These are the students who probably have the least internal motivation for writing, and they need to be given both emotional support and an obvious reward for completing the work.

The writing assignment itself should probably encourage the students' use of basic cognitive skills such as knowledge, comprehension, and application, and may be highly affective. The purpose of the writing assignment should seem relevant and practical to the student, and the audience, as real and familiar as possible. Additionally, the rhetorical mode which the assignment produces should be fairly simple, for example, narration or description.

Belonging-level students, on the other hand, reach out not to the teacher for help, but to each other for fulfillment of their needs for companionship and love. Whenever possible, the teacher should allow students to work together in small groups. Group work cannot be successful, however, without careful preparation. Both the advantages and disadvantages of group work should be explained to the students, as well as practical aspects such as whether they will share a grade as well as the work. A grade could come through a combination of the group leader's assessment of each individual's contribution, the teacher's evaluation of what each student has done, and the group's actual grade on the project

itself, or any one of these elements by itself.

Certain guidelines should also be specified about the amount of noise that the teacher will tolerate in the classroom while the students are working together and the amount of time they will have to complete their group project. Another consideration worth mentioning is whether the due date for a group project will be flexible, for example, if one group member is absent.

The form of assignments for belonging-level students should be relatively practical in terms of their real life experiences, yet it may be more sophisticated than that used for the safety-level students. The audience and subject can also be more distant and abstract, and fewer prewriting structures and less guidance throughout the assignment would be expected by the belonging-level student. The slightly higher cognitive skills of comprehension and application can be combined with less affective assignments, while narration, description, and explication can be used as rhetorical modes.

Ego-level students are generally quite grade conscious and need a great deal of public approval to function optimally in the classroom. Because of this need, the writing assignments for these students should put them into ego-fulfilling positions, whether those positions be real or imaginary.

The ego-level students should be able to work alone on their writing tasks and will need little prewriting and writing assistance from the teacher. These students are able to cope with abstract subjects; their writing purpose may be less practical and their audiences more ambiguous than they were for belonging-level students. In addition, these students are able to work with more sophisticated modes of expression and with complex forms such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

The papers of ego-level students should be evaluated in fairly conventional ways, for if everyone in the classroom gets an *A*, the grades for these students become meaningless. These students want to know that they did something extra to justify what they earned, something that not all others in the class were capable of doing.

Self-actualizing students often initiate their own writing. These students generally want an opportunity to explore their own ideas creatively and need little, if any, guidance from a teacher. They can assume the major role in their own learning and can intelligently choose adults other than the teacher to help them with their work. The qualified freedom given to a self-actualizing student requires a mutual respect between the student and the teacher. The teacher can serve as a guide, an occasional critic, and a constant supporter of this special student. The student should be encouraged to evaluate his own work as do real writers.

We gave three major writing assignments to our students during the second semester of their senior year. The first assignment based upon *Macbeth* was made after the students had read and studied the play, but before they had taken the test on it. In addition to all of the students' having a body of information about which to write, they found that the writing exercise served as an excellent review for the test on the play.

For the second assignment, we broke the traditional senior-year research paper into writing projects which we felt were appropriate for the variety of motivational needs and writing capabilities of our students. The assignment was made after the students had studied research skills and was accompanied by a series of due dates for the tentative thesis statement, tentative bibliography, note cards, outline, rough draft, and final paper.

The last assignment was modeled upon a rather typical affective composition topic: What Freedom Means to Me. Topics such as this can be deceptively difficult for students, and instead of inviting enjoyable opportunities for self-expression, they all too often turn the writing task into just another chore to be hurried through and handed in. To avoid this problem, we conducted extensive prewriting discussions on the various aspects of freedom. The students explored their own acquisitions of freedoms and filled in a personal freedom history chart and a social freedom diagram. They also reviewed the Bill of Rights and talked about the freedoms that they would never relinquish. The students ended the discussion by considering the idea that there are some people who do not want freedom and enjoy being bound by rules.

All students received the instructions and evaluation information for all assignments. Each selected the assignment level he or she wished to work on each time. Some students chose one level for one assignment and other levels for other assignments. All the examples of the students' work that we have selected are as they submitted them to us, inclusive of errors.

SAFETY-LEVEL ASSIGNMENTS

Johnny was typical of safety-level students. He had been placed in an average class because there was no more room in the below-average classes for him. He sat quietly in the back of the classroom and was a model student in conduct. He had learned years before how to play the educational "I'll be good if you pass me" game and without doing any homework, he had managed to pass every other year of his high school career.

In Johnny's opinion, English was "boring" and reading was "a waste of time." He felt that "writing is not as boring as the rest of it [English]," yet, in general, he could "find something better to do with time than to

write." When interviewed he said, "I write about what's on my mind, you know. I can do that. But to write about a certain topic, just—I don't know why, but I can't do that." Johnny did overcome this general attitude and completed all three writing assignments.

The following is the safety-level *Macbeth* assignment that Johnny and the other safety-level students chose to complete:

> You are to write two letters on which I will work closely with you to complete.
>
> First, imagine that Lady Macbeth left a suicide note for her husband to read after she was dead. You know that she has been greatly disturbed by the recent murders and her husband's strange behavior. Would she mention these things in the letter? Would she admit her own responsibility for what has happened to both of them? Write the letter for Lady Macbeth.
>
> Second, you are to write a business letter to King Edward from Macbeth. Macbeth knows that Macduff and Malcolm are in England, trying to get Siward and 10,000 troops to return with them to Scotland to overthrow him. Macbeth wants to ask King Edward to cooperate with him, as one king to another, to avoid this. In his letter, Macbeth is going to ask Edward to send Malcolm and Macduff back to Scotland to be punished as traitors to the crown. He is also going to ask that King Edward not send any troops to interfere with Scotland's internal affairs. After all, the country is still recovering from an invasion of Norwegian troops. Write the letter for Macbeth.
>
> You may need to refer to the business letter format on pages 468-484 of your grammar book. Your own address will be Dunsinane Castle; Glamis, Scotland. You can use today's month and day, but be sure to use the year 1057 in your heading. Your inside address will be His Most Gracious Majesty, King Edward; Buckingham Palace; London, England. Your salutation will be the word *Sir*, not *Dear Sir*. Remember to sign the letter as Macbeth, King of Scotland.
>
> Since this is a formal letter and you are asking for a favor, you will want to make sure that your letter is as neat as possible and that the grammar is correct. I will be glad to help you with both of these.
>
> You will be graded on the amount of obvious effort which you have put into the task.

We worked with Johnny for three days on the letters. He wrote Lady Macbeth's letter in cursive and typed Macbeth's business letter. Below are his letters.

Dear McBeth:

I am sorry that things had to end this way. But I take the blame for all of it. If I hadn't insisted on killing Duncan for the crown this might never have started. I realize that you killed the others to protect the crown. Both of us have been driven insane since you had Banquo killed. Malcolm and McDuff are on thier way to destroy you, and I Don't want to see it. Because McDuff is going to Be upset about you killing his wife and son.

Love Lady McBeth

Dunsinqne Cqstle
Clqmis Scotland
March)9,1057

His Most Gracious Majesty
King Edward
Buckingham palace
London England

Sir.

Itis my understanding that Malcolm and McDuff are in England trying to get Siward and 10,000 troops to assist them in a plot to overthrow me from the crown of Scotland. I am asking for your cooperation in stopping this. I would like for you to sent Macolm and McDuff back to Scotland to be punished as traitors to the crown.

I would also like for you to stop Siward and the troops from interferring with Scotlands affairs. After all we are just recovering from a war and invasion of Norwegian troops.Another war at this time would probably destroy the country.

Sincerly Yours
McBeth
King of Scotland

Johnny's papers were evaluated on the amount of effort that we felt he had put into them as compared with the quality of work that we thought he was capable of doing. On such a basis, Johnny received a *B-*,

with only the mechanics of sentence structure, capitalization, and spelling errors marked on the paper. We wrote in the side margins and at the top of the paper several comments, commending Johnny for what he did do right and making suggestions on how the paper could be improved if it were done again. Johnny was further encouraged to redo the paper, making the corrections that we had suggested, and to submit it again for a higher grade.

During his interview, Johnny had told us that he would write if he were given the chance to do so about "childhood" and "the way life appears" to him. He was given just such a chance on the research and freedom writing assignments.

On the research paper assignment, the safety-level choice told students

> You have a decision to make. You may be having a problem deciding what college to go to, which profession to enter, or what car to buy. This or a problem like it can be the basis for your research. You are to write your paper as if you were explaining to me how you arrived at your decision.
>
> Your thesis statement will probably be something like this:
>
> > A two-year college would be better for me to go to than a four-year college or a technical school.
> > Modeling would be a better career for me than retailing or nursing.
> > A Ford is a better car for a teenager than a Honda or a Chevy.
>
> You will have to do research in current sources (magazines, newspapers, vertical files, etc.). I will work closely with you to help you find and organize the information for your paper. You will be graded on the following basis:
>
> 45 points for the development of the ideas
> 30 points for the form of
> - title page 5
> - thesis statement page 5
> - outline 5
> - body of the paper 5
> - footnote page 5
> - bibliography 5
>
> 10 points for the sentence structure
> 5 points for spelling
> 5 points for capitalization
> 5 points for punctuation

Johnny's thesis statement for his research paper was "Being an electrician would be a better career for me to get into than carpentary or masonary." With the help of his distributive education teacher, he was able to locate much of his information in the vocational education books in his own classroom. The distributive education teacher had a special interest in Johnny, because not only did he want him to do his research paper, but he also wanted him to graduate with his class. With the D. E. teacher's help plus ours, Johnny was able to turn in a completed research paper on time.

Johnny received 84 points out of the possible 100, giving him a letter grade of a *C* on the paper. Due to our evaluating Johnny's paper in this manner, he had an equal chance with other members of the class to earn an acceptable grade on his work. Upon a more traditional basis, Johnny would have been doomed before he ever put his pen to paper to a *D* or an *F* in relation to the quality of work of which the other members of the class were capable.

For the freedom paper, Johnny again chose the safety-level assignment. By this time, he had become comfortable with the writing program and did the majority of the work on his paper by himself.

The safety-level "What Freedom Means to Me" assignment was

First, take your personal freedom history chart and go over it to see if there are any more examples that you can think of to fill in the various periods of time more completely.

Personal Freedom History

I. Pre-school years
   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

II. Elementary school years
   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

III. Middle school years
   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

IV. High school years
   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.
   E.

V. Early adult years
   A.
   B.
   C.
   D.

You will use your personal freedom history chart as the basis for your paper. Each one of the roman numerals will form a different paragraph for the body of the paper. You will also need an introduction and a conclusion. The title of your paper will be "What Freedom Means to Me."

I will work closely with you on both the rough draft and the final copy of the paper. The rough draft should be done in pencil and on one side of the paper so that we can revise it easily. The final copy should be in ink and on one side of the paper.

You will be evaluated on the amount of apparent effort which you have put into the paper.

Johnny surprised everyone with his freedom essay. He turned in the six pages of his essay, written in cursive, a day early. The text follows:

Freedom is a very important step in growing up. Some people have more freedom than others but we all have some freedom if not by law by nature. A person's freedom usally increases with age as you will hopefully be able to conclude from this paper.

Infants use the freedom to get what they want by crying. (Walking is usally the next freedom an infant uses. By walking the infant can get what he wants. Sometimes things that he shouldn't have.) When the infant learns to dress and feed himself, he no longer has to cry for what he wants, which is usally as much a freedom for the parents as it is for the child.

Elementary school makes a big step in a childs freedom. The child learns to take care of himself and starts to take on greater responsibility his responsibility may consist of getting on the bus, associating with other people, learning to be independant which will assist him for

the rest of his life.

Learning how to read is a big step and quite amazing to the elementary child this is very important to a young student and it should be because he will use this skill for the rest of his life. A child in his first years of school learns to deal with other people, which can be difficult to some students depending on how protective the childs parents are.

The middle school years give the child even more freedom. He starts going out with his friends without his parents watching over his shoulder. This is good experience but some students take to much advantage of this freedom a start getting themselves in trouble. Stealing and vandelizing seem to appeal to this age bracket. Even though these are minor offenses if they're caught it would follow them for the rest of their life.

Summer jobs also give middle school students alot more freedom. By having money the middle school student can start setting goals for himself. Saving his money for things that he would like to have. Paying for some of his own belongings will sometimes make him appreciate other peoples belongings. The child whose parents give them everything usally will not things as well as if he had worked for them.

The high school students first goal is getting his drivers license. I know that when I turned 16 I could hardly wait to get my license. The high school student does a little more experimenting than the middle school student. Some high school students experiment more than others. But the majority of them will experiment with first alcohol. Drugs are being experimented by high school students more than ever before. Getting a steady job is very important at this stage in life. This will make the Student more responsible than ever before. This gives him a chance to get to know more people, and gives him a small taste of what the money market is like. The high school student should start setting a few life time goals for himself. These goals might be starting a savings account. If the student has a fair paying job may be he can possibly take out a small loan in his own name. This will help to build his credit for the time when he decides to get an apartment or a car ect. But the student should make share that he can pay back the money or he is just defeating his purpose.

Voting is very important in growing up. I believe that everyone should exercise thier right to vote. Nothing aggravates me more than for someone to complain about the government when they never vote. Election day is your chance to choose the way they want they government run. Graduation is probably the most important time of your life.

Your life after graduation is full of change. After you graduate you start to make all of your own decisions. At this time in your life you start making plans to move out of your parents house and into your own place. Getting married and raising a family at this point is the biggest decision you probably would ever make. By this time your rights as a U.S. citizen is important.

After you've raised a family and at home with just your wife you look back on the times passed. You think of elementary school the things you did the good times and the bad. You think of your high school years your first car, your first date, graduation. You begin to remember when you first moved out on your own and making your own decisions and then you wish that you could do some of the things over again but you know that you never will. Freedom is very important to me and to most Americans. You want more and more freedom as you grow up but after you get all of your freedom you just wish sometimes that you had someone making some of the tough decisions for you again.

Johnny earned a *B+* on this paper; it was a dramatic improvement over all the writing he had done previously during the year. He did have some basic mechanical problems, but more importantly, he was able to produce a relatively long and coherent essay which communicated ideas to a fairly wide audience. Johnny had also gained enough confidence in himself and his writing by this time to move up to the next level of assignments. He was no longer inhibited by his lack of writing experience and now wanted to become a member of the writing groups around him. Even though very few other students in the class improved as quickly as Johnny, all did share with him a new sense of pride in their work.

BELONGING-LEVEL ASSIGNMENTS

The students working together on belonging-level assignments did so for a variety of reasons. One girl-boy combination said that they worked well together because they were good friends and they had worked successfully together on projects in other classes. A member of another such combination said, "It is easier to think up better ideas when you're with another person," and "it is also more fun than working alone."

Two young men on the football team who were also good friends chose to work together for rather paradoxical reasons. One of the two described himself as "Lazy, very lazy," and said that he chose to work with the other boy because "he is a good friend of mine and I know he works. I work with someone who's a good worker. He'll push me." His friend, interviewed later, said that the other boy was a real "go-getter"

and that he liked to work with him because "sometimes I feel like I don't want to do it any more, but when you have someone beside you wanting to keep going, it helps your attitude to keep going." No matter how the boys perceived each other and themselves, they worked well together not only on the *Macbeth* project, but also on the research paper.

The belonging-level *Macbeth* assignment read

> The members of your group are producing the biannual newspaper for Scotland. The big news, of course, will concern what has been happening to Macbeth. After your group has named your paper and selected an editor, each reporter should choose at least one of the following articles to write for the upcoming issue:
>
> a. A front-page news article about Macbeth's overthrow
>
> b. An interview with Malcolm
>
> c. An editorial on tyranny
>
> d. A letter to the editor from Donalbain, who is in Ireland
>
> e. A guest column by King Edward
>
> f. A letter to Dear Macabby from Lady Macbeth's gentlewoman, asking for ways to deal with her guilt. Remember, she kept Lady Macbeth's "sleep talk" secret and quite possibly made matters worse by doing so.
>
> g. Obituaries for those who died during the time-span of the play
>
> You may want to add other staff assignments or change these. You may even want to try writing these in blank verse. Some facts, of course, will need to be invented for your articles, but be sure that each has an accurate place of origin and a by-line.
>
> After all of the articles are written, the members of your group should work together to edit and prepare the paper for distribution. You will need to make group decisions about where each article will go and how the pages will be arranged.
>
> You will receive a grade that is the average of three parts. One-third will consist of the grade that the finished paper receives; one-third, the grade the editor decides that you have earned; and one-third, my assessment of your contribution to the group project.

The students wrote the newspapers on large pieces of construction paper, bound on the side. The names of the papers ranged from *The Hyrcan Times* to *The Scotland Crier.* The students combined their knowledge of modern journalistic techniques with our ideas for articles

and developed some novel slants for their pieces. One such article, an interview with Malcolm, follows:

Reporter: *Here we are with Malcolm, who is very mad and upset with all that Macbeth has done. Malcolm has troops ready to overthrow Macbeth's kingdom. Malcolm, how many men do you have?*

Malcolm: *I have ten thousand men to go after Macbeth. We are prepared to fight.*

Reporter: *We know that Macduff was at the castle in England. What exactly was said?*

Malcolm: *When Macduff came to the castle, I did not know if he was there to do harm or to help. I did not know whether to trust Macduff or not. I had to lie to him to see exactly where he stood. I told him I was a woman lover, greedy and commited many crimes.*

Reporter: *What was Macduff's reaction?*

Malcolm: *Well, when I said I was a woman lover he said, "There are plenty of women." When I said I was greedy he remarked, "There is plenty of money." When I stated that I had commited many crimes, he was enraged.*

Reporter: *We know that Ross had come to report that Macduff's family had been murdered. What was his reaction after Ross reported this news to him?*

Malcolm: *Poor Macduff, he had to take it like a man. This made things easier to believe. Macduff had more than one reason to hate Macbeth.*

Reporter: *Do you believe that things will go smoothly in battle?*

Malcolm: *Yes, Macbeth is only one man; we are a whole army prepared to face anything.*

Later in the day after the killing of Macbeth.

Reporter: *How does it feel to know that such an evil person has been put to death?*

Malcolm: *Much pitty is felt. Macbeth and his wife are both gone and that will help everyone. I will become king and thanes and kinsmen shall become earls. I invite you to Scone to see us crowned.*

Reporter: *Well, there you have it, friends and foes, everything Malcolm has to express.*

This was followed on the page by a formal, signed invitation from Malcolm to the people of Scotland to his coronation at Scone.

Dear Macabby letters seemed to be lively parts of all the groups' newspapers. One of the Dear Macabby letters read

Dear Macabby,

A friend of mine is Lady Macbeth's gentlewoman. She is feeling very guilty about an incident that she witnessed at the castle. Being Lady Macbeth's gentlewoman, she is constantly with her and knows her every doings.

One night she watched as Lady Macbeth sleep walked and spoke of the recent murders. Lady Macbeth appeared to be most concerned about Duncan's death. My friend has kept this whole thing a secret for quite some time and is feeling very guilty for doing so. She fears for her life if she reveals the lady's "sleep talk." What can she do to relieve this guilt?

Guilty in Dunsinane

Dear Guilty in Dunsinane,

Dealing with guilt and fear at the same time is very difficult for anyone. I have found that jogging is an excellent way to relieve pressure, anxiety and hemoroids. As for her guilt, the best way to relieve that is by sharing her secret. I suggest the Lady's doctor. He is the most qualified to deal with this type of situation. Good luck!

Another letter to Macabby was from "A Witch's Friend," asking for advice on how to deal with an unreasonable "queen witch" who does not allow her fellow witches to "have any fun." Macabby's advice was to forsake the "life of fun" in order to avoid creating "an even greater problem."

Most of the group newspapers contained death notices. An example of one is below:

DUNCAN

Departed this life our great King of Scotland on June 19, 1080. His death was a great tragedy, but he will long be remembered for his bravery in his victory against the Norwegians. He was survived by his two sons, Malcolm and Donaidbain. His burial will take place at Colmekills on June 23, 1080, at 3:00.

CHANCELLOR

Guard to our late King Duncan, passed away June 20, 1080.

STEWARD

Guard to our late King Duncan, passed away June 10, 1080.

BANQUO

Departed this life, November 17, 1080, Banquo. He was survived by his son Fleance. He was a general in the King's army. He will be put to rest on November 20, 1080, at 2:30 p. m. on the grounds of his estate in the family cemetery.

LADY MACDUFF

Wife of the Thane of Fife. Passed away December 1, 1080. Her soul will be put to rest on the grounds of Fife Castle.

WILLIAM MACDUFF

Son of the Thane of Fife. Passed away on December 1. 1081. He was but 10 years old. He will be buried on the same day as Lady Macduff.

YOUNG SEWARD

Young Seward has paid a soldier's debt. He passed away while at battle on January 4, 1081. He will be buried at his home in England.

Some of the most interesting parts of the newspapers were those that the students included that were not on our list. The weather forecasts ranged from "Rain continues to pour from the dark and gloomy sky," to "The weather has been gloomy, very cloudy, and altogether horrible. Things should begin to look much better with plenty of sunshine and blue skies." There were also the "Macbeth Crossword Puzzle," the "Macbeth Seck and Find," and the want ads advertising, for example, "For sale, all kinds of armor; if interested come to Talket Castle and Macvete will be glad to help you." Several papers also included astrological forecasts, of which the following is an example:

ARIES — *Honesty is not always the best policy—beware of relatives.*

TAURUS — *You will begin to take charge—you are capable of influencing people—authority will come your way—make good judgments. Bad thoughts will keep you up at night.*

CANCER — *Sometimes good guys finish first. Forestry will play an important role in your life. Powers are not everything; make your own decisions.*

VIRGO — *"Don't judge a book by its cover." Close friends can sometimes turn on you. Cancer plays an important role in your life.*

LIBRA *Revenge is what you want. Respect and love your family while you can.*

SCORPIO *Flee while you can—England awaits you. Don't be gone to long because fame awaits you.*

PISCES *You'll experience adventure. Be close to your father while you have a chance. Ireland awaits you.*

AQUARIUS *You'll become a messenger, will have to bring bad news. Libra will be unhappy.*

CAPRICORN *Your life will soon be over. Make necessary arrangements.*

SAGITARIUS *One of you will have very bad luck this year. Guilt will cause you to go insane.*

The articles were signed, making it easy for us to assess the quality of the work that each student contributed to the newspapers. This evaluation was coupled with in-class observations of the group members working together and discussions with each paper's editor to arrive at a final grade for each group member.

The assignment that belonging-level students were given for the research paper read

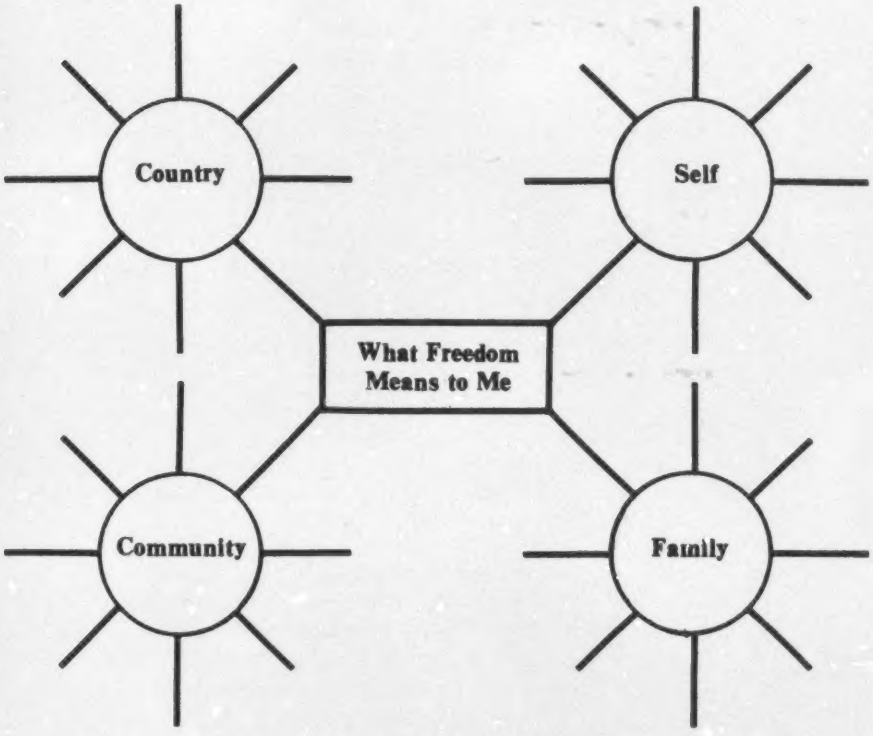
> Do you have a person with whom you would like to work on the research for the paper? It is best to pick a person who usually earns the same grades that you do on writing projects and is reliable.
>
> First, choose a topic that you and your friend can disagree on. Then work together on the research, but each of you will write your own paper. One of you will argue in favor of the issue, and one will argue against it.
>
> You can also work with your friend on editing and rewriting the paper, but each of you will receive your own grade for your own paper.

Some of the topics that the students chose to work on together for the belonging-level assignment included arguments for and against a peacetime draft, capital punishment, and the use of nuclear reactors. Through working together, the students found it much easier to locate information in the library, and they each had a supportive cohort during the writing process and an interested proofreader and editor during the revision stage. The research papers of the belonging-level students, as well as those of the ego and self-actualization students, were evaluated

on a traditional basis, with the mechanical errors marked and side comments added concerning content and form.

Many students also worked together on the freedom papers. The belonging-level freedom assignment was

> You and one other person should get together to work on this project. Take the "What Freedom Means to Me" diagram and discuss with your friend how it can be filled out more completely. Remember that you are to write examples on the spokes of the wheels of what freedom means to you in terms of yourself, your family, your community, and your country.



After you and your friend have enough ideas for both of your essays, you should begin your rough drafts. You will probably have at least one paragraph for each of the wheels of your diagram, plus an introduction and a conclusion.

After you finish your rough draft, you and your friend should go over each other's papers, correcting any grammatical mistakes, pointing out any underdeveloped thoughts, and providing suggestions for improving the organization of the paper. Your final copies should be proofread by each of you also in order to catch any mistakes that may creep into the papers when they are copied in ink to be handed in to me.

The belonging-level freedom papers, as well as those of the three other levels, were evaluated on the basis of the amount of apparent effort which the student had put into the project. By this point in the program, almost all the students were so involved in their own writing that they were investing a great deal of effort in their work and getting much satisfaction from their endeavors. They were no longer doing the assignments just to keep the teacher happy or to get by.

The following freedom essay was done by Robin, a belonging-level student:

What is freedom? Well, freedom to me is being able to get up in the morning knowing that I can go out into the world and do most anything I want. It means not having someone watching me to see if I am going to do something wrong. I could not imagine being in a place where I could not do anything without having to ask someone first. We can have these freedoms in America, and we should take advantage of the many other freedoms that are available to us, such as voting, working, voicing our own opinion, etc. We acquire our freedoms from several different sources. Some come directly from ourselves, some from our family, some from our community, and some from our society.

If we really concentrate and think about it, we can think of many freedoms that we acquire on our own. As we grow from infants to children, we begin to crawl, walk, talk, feed ourselves, and go to school for the first time. These are freedoms that we acquire while we are young. As we get older, we begin to make our own choices about friends, jobs, and careers. We begin to make our own decisions without much help from our parents. With freedoms such as these and sources of income, such as jobs, we feel free to do most anything we want. This helps us to grow and become better individuals, because we do not feel like we are trapped into doing things we really do not want to do.

Our family gives us a lot of freedom, some we probably do not even think about. As we grow into young adults and go on to middle school and high school, our families give us such freedoms as driving the car, dating, and doing most of the things we want. They feel that since we are getting older, we should have more responsibility. As we gain more responsibility, we acquire more freedom. Our parents let us take over the house while they are away. They begin to trust us at doing bigger and better things. They also give us a lot of understanding.

Sometimes it seems like our parents try to cut off a lot of our freedom, but this is not true. They are just trying to teach us right from wrong. They are looking out for us, so maybe we will not get hurt.

We also acquire some freedom from our community. Most of us do not realize it, but we acquire such freedoms as transportation, health services, education, jobs, and protection from our community to us. There are buses that are available for us to ride if we do not have a car. If we have medical appointments or emergencies, our community provides volunteers that will make sure we get to where we have to go. This is one freedom that is very important. Our community provides us with wonderful health services. Low income families can receive help such as food stamps, free medical services, and help in many other areas. Education is one extremely important freedom that most of us take for granted. We all need some amount of education in order to survive in this world, and our community provides us with the schools and necessary facilities. There are many different forms of housing that are provided for us also. We can live in a variety of places, depending on our income. There are many different places available to us for jobs, so most of us can work where we want. The freedom given to us by our community that is most important is protection. We have protection such as policemen, firemen, and other law enforcers that protect us everyday. They are there when we need them, which makes them a very valuable freedom.

The last and most important source that we get freedom from is our society. Things such as freedom of speech, petition, etc. are given to us by our society. Others such as the right to choose our own religion, the right to bear arms, the right to vote, the right to drink, and the right to drive are also given to us by our society. These are freedoms that most people overlook and take for granted. They probably do not even consider them freedoms, but they are. If we did not have these freedoms, life would be pretty desolate. Americans do not know how that can be, because we are free people.

We can now understand how important it is to know what freedoms we have and where they come from. Freedom is something we acquire from several different sources, but the four most important ones are ourselves, our family, our community, and our society.

Robin had worked closely with another girl through the various stages of the paper. Robin's paper received a *B*, and her partner's, a *C+*. Even though Robin had a little difficulty thinking through some of her ideas, she had expressed them in a well-organized manner and in fairly conventional English. We included along with Robin's grade on her paper many comments about the quality of her writing and some suggestions for improvements for future papers.

EGO-LEVEL ASSIGNMENTS

Students who chose the ego-level assignments for the *Macbeth,* research, and freedom papers did so primarily because they felt they "needed a challenge." These students typically liked to work by themselves and to be independent.

One such student was Courtney, who throughout high school had been in average English classes. When interviewed he said, "I usually do what I feel and not what other people do." This feeling probably accounts for his having chosen cross-country and track in which to participate, rather than football or basketball, more team-oriented sports.

Courtney chose the ego-level *Macbeth* assignment because he "didn't want to work with other people." When asked what he liked to write about, he said, "Something I have an opinion about and something I'm interested in and I know a lot about." He had enjoyed reading *Macbeth* and felt that the ego-level assignment suited his writing ability and desire to work alone. His assignment was

> Imagine that you are Macbeth and that you are in your chamber as the enemy forces prepare for the final attack on Dunsinane. You have decided to write a statement, defending your past actions. You would like to leave your version of the story for future historians. Write your defense. Remember to present the facts from Macbeth's point of view and to keep the most convincing argument for last.
>
> It would probably be good for you to get out your copy of *The Lively Art of Writing* and to refer to it as you write your paper. You are going to have to be as convincing as possible, for the facts as they stand now make you look like a tyrant. Your argument should be carefully considered and fully developed. Express yourself in the best grammar that you can, because you know that future generations will judge you not only on what you say, but also on how you say it.
>
> You will be graded as you would be on any formal essay.

Courtney's paper entitled "Macbeth" follows:

> *My time is growing short, but I leave this life feeling not guilty but sorrowed at the events which lead to my fast approaching death. Before any judgement is to be passed I wish to review the events which lead to my death. I have been labeled a tyrant by my old friends and comrades. I leave this letter to defend my actions. I committed these deeds not out of avarice, but because I believed they would be for the good of Scotland.*

Although I cannot deny the fact that it was my hand that murdered the beloved Duncan, King of Scotland, I will protest to my last breath that I did this deed out of greed. The murders of Banquo and also on McDuffs family were also committed at my orders, but again I tell you that these hideous deeds were not committed for personal gain.

These actions as terrible as they are, were justified by the events which surround them. Duncan although well liked was an old & weak man. Weakness was not Duncans greatest flaw; he was also very naive. Did he not bestow upon me, the one who plotted his murder, the high honor of Thane of Cawdor. A King who is blind to those who plot against him will soon let his senility endanger the kingdom. My case against Duncan is strong. I took his life and the crown of Scotland only for the sake of strengthening Scotland.

Even with all this strong evidence pointing towards Duncans weakness as a king, I would not have seen these flaws had it not been for my dearest wife. When it became clear to me that Scotland could not thrive under such a naive and weak king, I would not have had the courage to do what was necessary to preserve the kingdom without Lady Macbeths pressuring hand.

The crown of Scotland was not enough to secure the strength of the kingdom. Challenged by Banquo & also McDuff I myself began to think that I had committed an unforgiveable sin with the murder of Duncan. The witches, the same ugly hags who foresaw that the crown of Scotland would soon be mine, led me to believe that no man should stand in my way. But even they have now turned against me as Birnam Wood marches up Dunsinane.

My actions although seemingly unexcusable were brought about by events surrounding them. Now that my life is close to an end, I hope that future generations will view me not as a tyrant, but as a martyr for the good of Scotland.

Courtney's paper earned a *B*, with markings in the left margin indicating grammatical errors and comments in the right, top, and bottom margins on the paper's strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. Courtney and the other students who had written defenses for Macbeth read their papers to the class and the best essays were posted on the bulletin board.

The majority of students in all the classes chose the ego-level assignment for the research paper. The assignment read

> Are you against the draft? Are you in favor of abortions? Do you agree with the President's economic policies?

Take your opinion and turn it into a documented paper, using quotations and statistics to illustrate, strengthen, and support your side of the argument. Of course, you will want to mention and explain any good arguments against your view early in the paper.

You should be able to work well without a great deal of help from me. I will grade you as I would on any formal essay.

When asked why she had chosen to do the ego-level assignment, one student said, "I am usually good at giving my opinion about things and I usually stand strongly behind my opinion." Most other students agreed with her; however, a boy said, "I am in favor of fusion energy, and I thought this would be a good chance to dig more deeply into fusion research and learn more about it." Popular topics for the papers included not only nuclear energy, but also abortions, E.R.A., child abuse, drugs, Vietnam, sex education, and the legal age for drinking.

A large number of students also chose the ego-level assignment for the freedom paper. The students were told to do the following:

You have been selected by a local civic group to give a speech at one of their meetings on "What Freedom Means to Me." In order to prepare for the speech, you study the Bill of Rights in your government book, and you decide which of the 26 amendments to the Constitution are most important to you. You also begin think ing about

the situation in Poland, Iran, Afghanistan, and El Salvador;

the U.S. hostages, the boat people, and the Vietnamese refugees;

Lech Walesa, Martin Luther King, and Mahatma Gandhi;

E.R.A., religious freedom, and censorship.

Things finally come together in your mind, and you know what you want to tell the civic group about freedom. Write the speech.

This was a perfect assignment for Andrew. He was interested in current affairs and wanted eventually to go into politics to "have power" and "be in the limelight." He was already the president of his senior class, editor of the school's yearbook, lead in the school's production of *Dr. Faustus,* and valedictorian of his class. The ideas for the paper came easily to him, allowing him to hand the paper in a day ahead of the rest of the students in the class. His paper follows:

As I sat watching television on that fateful afternoon, the networks were showing the umpteenth rerun of the assassination attempt. And since I had neither the cynicism of age or the remembrance of those past assassinations that began the year I was born, I was shocked, dismayed, angry, and upset. In short, I was experiencing the very same feelings the entire nation once experienced when an assassin's bullets destroyed our youthful president eighteen years ago.

And as I looked at the film footage one more time and observed various people's reactions, I saw that this time they had somehow expected it. This time few were shocked, dismayed perhaps, but not surprised. There were some cries of indignation, but generally they were muted by the quiet drone of a complacent public. To me, this was what was most alarming of all because throughout history, from the fall of the Roman Empire to the rise of Nazi Germany, complacency has always led to freedom's destruction. And as I heard repeated, "Well, what can I do?" comments, I realized that if the United States ever loses its freedoms, it will not be by invasion but by internal submission. We will simply become too apathetic a society.

Activism is the lifeblood of a democracy, the safeguard of freedom. The activism of the sixties took us from the McCarthy restrictions of the fifties to the King liberties of the sixties and seventies. But now, more because of an uncaring electorate than their numerical strength, various extremely polarized groups are once again attacking our freedoms. Ideas, not just obsenities, are being attacked and for a democracy, this is heresy. Special interest groups flourish because they can command the wrath of their constituents and so perverse national policies. Political retaliation and intimidation are used to dictate public policy while meanwhile, a quiet, consenting public remains in deep sleep.

For freedom's sake, our nation cannot afford an unconcerned electorate. A nation where its citizens are more concerned with who shot J.R. than who shot the president is in trouble; a nation where an evening in front of the television is more important than an hour at the polls is in trouble; a nation which turns its back on its responsibilities and refuses to affront censorship is in danger of losing its freedoms.

And so for me, freedom is as much a responsibility as a privilege. We have never achieved our democratic freedoms easily, certainly not through apathy; freedom has been bought with the sacrifice, activism, vigilance, and sometimes blood of our forefathers. Whether at Bunker Hill, Yorktown, New Orleans, Appomatox, the Argonne, Berlin, Okinawa, or Selma, Alabama, our forefathers reacted, if belatedly, to threats to their freedoms; and so I hope we act similarly. Americans

must realize that democratic timidness can only lead to autocratic boldness. The apathy of the eighties, like that of the fifties, may lead to McCarthy-like excesses; and if that happens, we shall no longer be free. It may be too late for awakening then.

I did not mean for this paper to be as pessimistic as it sounds. The American people usually react to threats to their freedoms sooner or later, with lateness being the trend. I just hope Americans feel a responsibility to their ancestors and to themselves to pass this over two-hundred-year-old torch of freedom to the future. For if we let this torch of freedom, born from a fire of activism and concern, be doused by a sea of complacency, we certainly must be the most condemned era of man.

So, what does freedom mean to me? It means caring enough for this privilege of individual choice to be ever vigilant and jealous. And so, as the gun shots once more re-echo and destroy my complacency, I hope they also destroy our national complacency. A democracy needs, from time to time, to awaken from its long sleep because as long as we are vigilant, we'll be free.

Andrew earned an *A-* for his paper. We showed him the few grammatical mistakes that he had made and the areas which could be more fully developed. We also showed him how, perhaps unknowingly, he had imitated in his style Martin Luther King's and ex-President Kennedy's use of repetition, parallelism, antithesis. Andrew redid his paper and had it typed so that he could enter it in a local civic group's essay contest. Even though a teacher would be remiss in allowing Andrew and students like him to spend their entire secondary school careers writing political speeches, it could serve as a beginning toward motivating them not only to improve what they seem to enjoy doing, but also to develop interest in branching off into other types of writing and ultimately advancing to an even higher level.

SELF-ACTUALIZATION-LEVEL ASSIGNMENTS

For some students in an English class, the best instructional approach is simply to leave them alone to explore ideas and composition techniques for themselves. These are the students that we too often bore in our attempts to teach to the average students in the class or to indoctrinate the masses in formula writing espoused by grammar books and curriculum guides. Chuck could easily have been one of these students if he had not learned early how to deal with the system on his way to becoming both the vice-president and president of the student government association, president of the honor society, chairperson of the honor council, representative to Boy's State and Boy's Nation, and one of the top academic students in his class.

Chuck liked English and had always done well in his high school English courses. He particularly liked writing, for it gave him an opportunity to express himself and "to let go of my emotions." When interviewed Chuck said that he most enjoyed doing satirical and creative writing (which he had been asked to do very little of in school) and that formula writing (which he had been asked to do quite a lot of) "deadens enthusiasm" and is "too logical to be anything more than mundane and trite." He ideally saw the purpose of writing as not "the simple recording of facts, but rather revealing the facts and their impact in a different, original light." He was able to do this with the self-actualization *Macbeth* assignment, which was as follows:

> Think about the play and decide upon an aspect of it that is particularly meaningful to you. It may or may not be one of the following lines:
>
> Naught's had, all's spent,
> Where our desire is got without content.
>
> or
>
> Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
> And then is heard no more; it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing.
>
> Illustrate the ideas you see developing from the play in an essay, short story, poem, or play of your own. This is a chance not only for you to do whatever you would like to do, but also for you to be creative. However, there are certain expectations placed upon you. You will need to work diligently on whatever you decide to do. Feel free to ask for help from other teachers and even your parents and family friends—maybe one is a poet or writer. You will be graded on the amount of apparent effort that you have devoted to the project and your creativity.

For his paper, Chuck evaluated Johnson's criticism of Shakespeare in light of his own understanding of *Macbeth.* Having been schooled for years in grammar rules and the axioms of third-person propriety, he saw this assignment as a legitimate opportunity to use the first person "I" in a paper for English class, something that he had not done for three years. His paper is below:

> *William Shakespeare is one of the most admired writers of English literature. In his works, he presents the passions of man's complex*

nature. Samuel Johnson, in "The Preface to Shakespeare," calls Shakespeare "the poet of nature," yet in the same work he mentions numerous faults in Shakespeare's writings. I feel that some of these faults that he outlines are clearly present in Macbeth.

According to Johnson, Shakespeare "carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong." Macbeth is the prime example of this flaw in the play. In the first few Scenes, Shakespeare depicts Macbeth as a brave, courageous, noble, and loyal man who has just been a victor in battle. When he and Banquo meet the witches, Macbeth is curious and pensive, but he hides his feelings. In the next scene, this supposedly strong character is convinced to murder King Duncan, a just friend and a kind superior who has just dubbed him Thane of Cawdor, through insults thrown at him by his wife. Macbeth murders the king and his impetuosity, paranoia, and cowardice then lead him to kill his dear friend Banquo and the wife and children of Macduff. Quite simply, Macbeth, "the milk of human kindness," turns sour. I feel that this transition from gallantry to heinousness is inadequate and destroys the continuity of Macbeth's character. Macbeth's unrealistic fall cushions the impact of the play. As Johnson states, "The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality."

Shakespeare's works are filled with beautiful soliloquys and speeches. In Macbeth, however, I got an overdose of couplets which fall in blatently predictable places throughout the play. They occurred at the ends of dramatic scenes, and they did little but deter from the mood that Shakespeare succeeds in producing. Johnson says, "A quibble is to Shakespeare what luminous vapors are to the traveler: he follows it all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire." I like to think of pithy rhymes as the spice added to a work. In Macbeth, the sing-song effect is sickeningly sweet.

Johnson further notes that Shakespeare is "much more careful to please than to instruct." Through the use of the porter and the witches, he tries to maintain the base attention of the groundlings. I feel that the witches would have much more meaning in the play if they act as Macbeth's conscience, much as the good and bad angels function in Christopher Marlowe's Dr. Faustus. Instead of destroying suspense through constant foreshadowing, the witches could offer Macbeth forgiveness and life through repentance and surrender. This would maintain suspense and give the play greater moral meaning.

Perhaps one of the more obvious of Shakespeare's faults in the play is the way that he ends Macbeth. Johnson stated, "It may be observed that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected.

When he found himself near the end of the work, . . . he shortened the labor to snatch the profit." The play loses momentum in Act IV, after the witches have given their final warnings. Indeed, Shakespeare's endings leave little to the imagination. Romeo and Juliet die, Othello dies, Caesar dies, and Macbeth dies. Couldn't Macbeth's damnation be better fulfilled by his having to live in shame? Perhaps this pity for Macbeth, of which I feel none, would be better enforced.

Through Macbeth, I can see some of Johnson's examples of Shakespeare's writing faults. Yet, in the same glance, I can see the beauty of Shakespeare's eloquence. Without a doubt, some of his flaws come from concessions which he had to make to his audience. Without those concessions, however, his works may not have lasted long enough for the world to realize their importance.

Chuck's paper earned an *A*, but the grade was really not as important as the discussions which we had with him and what he seemed to have discovered about the writing process. For the first time he saw that academic writing can also be what he referred to as "real writing" and that criticism does not necessarily entail the student's assuming the voice of an omnipotent, effaced critic. He began to admit his own person into his writing as a valid participant in the process of discovery.

The assignment for the research paper on the self-actualization level was similarly structured to encourage exploration and creativity. The assignment was

> Have we read anything this year that has excited you? Perhaps something was discussed in last year's English class that you would like to explore more thoroughly. Your interest could be similar to one of the following questions:
>
> > Is Macbeth a tragic hero?
> > How did the people in Steinbeck's life affect his writing?
> > What is the symbolic value of light and darkness in Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*
>
> Form an opinion about an aspect of a piece of literature which you can prove with research.
>
> I will assume that you can do all of the intermediate research steps and will grade you on the final paper only.

Gwen, like Chuck, liked to read and write. She wrote in her journal regularly, entered writing contests, wrote for the school's newspaper, developed science fiction stories for the illustrations that a friend of hers drew, and viewed composition assignments as "good practice for a possible future writing career." She consistently selected self-actualization

assignments, because she said "they left me free to write what I wanted, without a strict form to follow. I like to see what I can do with my writing. I don't like to structure my writing, just to stick it in forms that you must follow."

A basic component of instruction of self-actualization students is encouraging them to work with someone other than their teacher on assignments. Gwen did just that when she found out that we knew little about gothic fiction and had never heard of *The Stand* by Stephen King. Gwen sought the help of the ninth-grade honors English teacher who had read a great deal of gothic fiction and shared Gwen's enthusiasm for *The Stand.* The teacher helped Gwen not only with narrowing her thesis, but also with finding information and revising her rough draft.

Asked what she thought of the experience, Gwen said, "We [the teacher and she] were able to freely express the work and its ideas. She encouraged me, so it wasn't that I did 30% and she did 70%, but closer to the other way around. We became side-tracked once in a while, but even this helped. It gave me a break so inspiration could strike." The teacher with whom Gwen worked also enjoyed the experience. She said, "Both sides of this arrangement benefit. The student receives individual attention and more creative freedom, while the teacher gets to work with her favorite field or genre." An additional advantage the teacher found was that she "had an opportunity to examine problems of writing at an upper level" and see their resemblance to the problems of her own students.

Gwen tried to prove in her paper that *The Stand* is more allegorical than gothic. Topics that other students chose included the comic elements in Charles Dickens' novels, the accuracy of the portrayal of the migrant's plight in *The Grapes of Wrath,* and the relationship of the characters in *The Great Gatsby* with the people in F. Scott Fitzgerald's life.

The freedom paper posed the greatest challenge for most of the students. As one student said, "It at first seemed so easy, but once you got into it, it was really hard." The "What Freedom Means to Me" paper, like many highly affective assignments, can be deceptively difficult even for the best students. The self-actualization freedom paper assignment read

> Let the idea of "What Freedom Means to Me" drift around in your mind a bit and allow inspiration to strike. You may want to think about William Wordsworth's poem "Nuns Fret Not at Their Convent's Narrow Room." You may even want to write about people who do not want freedom or those who have had too much freedom.

Do some research, talk to some people, and put your ideas together into an essay that is fresh and creative.

Gwen's freedom paper was a satire on freedom which pointed out, among other things, that having to write the paper in the form of an essay was "not what freedom means." Another student, Mary, let her freedom paper develop from her interest in the situation in Northern Ireland. All year long she had been studying the works of James Joyce and had done her research paper on an aspect of one of his novels. Mary, a Catholic, was sympathetic with the Partisans in Northern Ireland and explored her feelings in the narrative essay which follows:

The little boy, age seven, sat in his classroom in the city of Londonderry, Northern Ireland. He was a Catholic, and to be a Catholic in Northern Ireland was a dangerous thing indeed. His name was Paddy Kane. For Paddy, freedom was a restricting and intangible thing.

As Paddy sat in school, he wondered what other boys and girls were like in the world. Did they have such a nice school?

Paddy and his classmates said the pledge of allegiance every morning while the soldiers of the Irish Republican army gazed on. The army, which Paddy wanted to join when he grew up, occupied the other half of the school. The soldiers kept their sandbags up against the wall to protect themselves. They had guns, too. They were going to try to gain freedom for all the Irish.

There was one thing Paddy didn't understand. If the soldiers were trying to gain freedom for the Irish people, why didn't the Protestants want to join them. Didn't people who lived on such a small island want to be friends? It didn't make too much sense, but then, not much did. Anyway, his mother and father had said the Protestants could take their "freedom" back to England with them. Who wanted them anyway?

School was over. Paddy ran out into the street. He and a group of other boys were going over to their playground, which was really a deserted street. They ran over quickly, because they wanted to get there before the stupid Protestant boys. Paddy liked the playground. It had really good bricks. It didn't occur to Paddy, however, that broken bricks weren't usually found in playgrounds. He hadn't come to understand that the bricks came from skirmishes between the Catholics and Protestants. Each was fighting for what it believed was freedom for Ireland. The bricks in his playground had come off a nearby Protestant family's home, but that didn't bother Paddy. It didn't matter to him that a little Protestant boy his own age had been crippled when a bomb exploded near his home where he'd been playing. It had been done in the name of freedom, hadn't it?

Paddy and the boys played soldiers for a time in the street until they noticed the British soldiers again. They never really noticed them anymore; they were always there. Paddy hadn't even heard people screaming at the soldiers, telling them to go away and free someone else. Paddy had never understood why the soldiers weren't the good guys. Didn't they want to get rid of the Protestants and make it a free Ireland?

It was time to go home. Both his father and mother worked, but still they ate mostly potatoes. That was something they didn't talk about. He's heard something terrible had happened a long time ago with the potatoes, but he didn't understand that either. He also didn't know who Parnell was and what betrayal meant.

After dinner Paddy watched television with his parents. Another bus had been blown up that day. Paddy thought the Protestants deserved to have their bus blown up. They'd killed ten Catholics the week before.

Paddy wasn't scared about getting blown up. He had gone to church the day before with his mother and father. The priest had said God would watch over all the good Catholic boys and lay down His mighty hand on the Protestants of Ulster. But there was still another thing Paddy didn't understand. Why, if God said to love everyone, did his mother and father hate the Protestants? Paddy knew, though, that if his mother and father said they were bad, well, then they were. After all, didn't his mother and father know everything?

It was time to go to sleep. Paddy said his prayers and thanked God he was such a lucky boy. God loved him instead of the Protestants. And he had a mother and a father who loved him, too.

V

Implementation of the Program

The approach to writing instruction that we are suggesting is not a return to the chaotic, migraine-fraught period of the sixties when mandated individualization meant the almost impossible task of providing innumerable plans for twenty-five to thirty students per period. Nor are we suggesting that a teacher should go into the classroom tomorrow and attempt to write assignments on four different levels and hope for any real degree of success. In some classrooms, a teacher would not even want to give the students four choices. A below-average class would probably be comfortable with only safety and belonging-level assignments, whereas an Advanced Placement or honors class would usually receive only ego or self-actualization assignments. The teacher's decision, of course, would vary greatly with the age of the students, and it is, perhaps, only with an average group of students that a teacher would find it appropriate to try all four levels at one time.

Pigeon-holing students into safety, belonging, ego, and self-actualization categories, besides being inimical to our philosophy of teaching, is also impossible. Students change every day, and while they may appear to have more belonging or ego-level traits one day, they will not necessarily display these same traits the next day on the same task. This is, after all, the nature of learning and explains why no machine will ever really be able to replace living beings, capable of making adjustments in instruction to the constantly changing moods and capabilities of their students.

We never told our students on what level we felt that they belonged and we never labeled their assignments. The assignment sheets that they received contained all four variations of the writing projects, numbered and arranged in order of increasing difficulty. Particularly at first we helped guide the students in their selections of what to do by telling them the type of writer for which each assignment was designed and the type of evaluation that the finished piece would receive.

Naturally the students made some adjustments in their selections

after the first assignments were completed and evaluated. Some students changed from group projects to individual work. One student said, "I felt I could do better on my own," and another added, "I don't want to have to rely on someone else for part of my grade." Other students who may have deliberately chosen an easy assignment and found that their grade was an honest reflection of the amount of work that it had taken them to complete the project changed to assignments more accurately matched to their abilities.

Still other students sought more of a challenge. One boy said, "Why I chose these particular numbers [*Macbeth*, #1 (safety) and research paper, #2 (belonging)] is because at first I thought I was not a good writer. As I went along, I just moved up a level to a much harder one, and I expect to keep moving up." Another boy added, "If a student is not given a chance to try to go above himself and write more difficult papers than previously before, he will not develope his writing fully."

Some other students adjusted their selections downward. Either their grades on their projects had not been what they had expected or they wanted to write for a different purpose. As one student said, "I chose to do #4 [self-actualization assignment] on *Macbeth* because writing a poem suited me better since this was what was floating around in my head. I chose #3 [ego-level assignment] for the research paper because I have a strong opinion about the subject I chose, which was abortion." With very few exceptions, the students chose assignments eventually which we felt were appropriate for them.

All the students appreciated being given the opportunity to select their own type of assignment. Some of the comments that they made about this choice include

This way everyone had a chance to make a good grade, whether they were good at writing or not.

I think that it is nice for the teacher to realize that nobody is the same and that some people are better writers than others.

If we would have been made to write a paper without choosing our assignment, then we would feel hatred and jealousy of other students' papers.

I think it helps when people in the class are doing different assignments because all the ideas and concepts don't get used up.

Not everyone is alike, so you should be able to have the right to show your difference. I felt it was a good way to show our independence and give us a better chance at a better grade.

People can do their best on something they feel comfortable with.

It makes the student more interested in the work and it's not so much an assignment that the student wouldn't want to do.

The last student's remark summarizes what we have found to be the real success of applying Maslow's motivational theories to the teaching of writing. It is, after all, only through the students' wanting to write, that we will ever be able to get them to write more and to eventually improve their writing skills.

Resources

Covington, Martin V. and Beery, Richard G. *Self-Worth and School Learning.* New York: Rinehart and Winston, 1976.

Our students' self-concepts influence their desires and need for success. This book examines both institutional and student-related causes of success and failure in the classroom. It may be particularly useful to teachers who want to put theory into practice in their own classrooms.

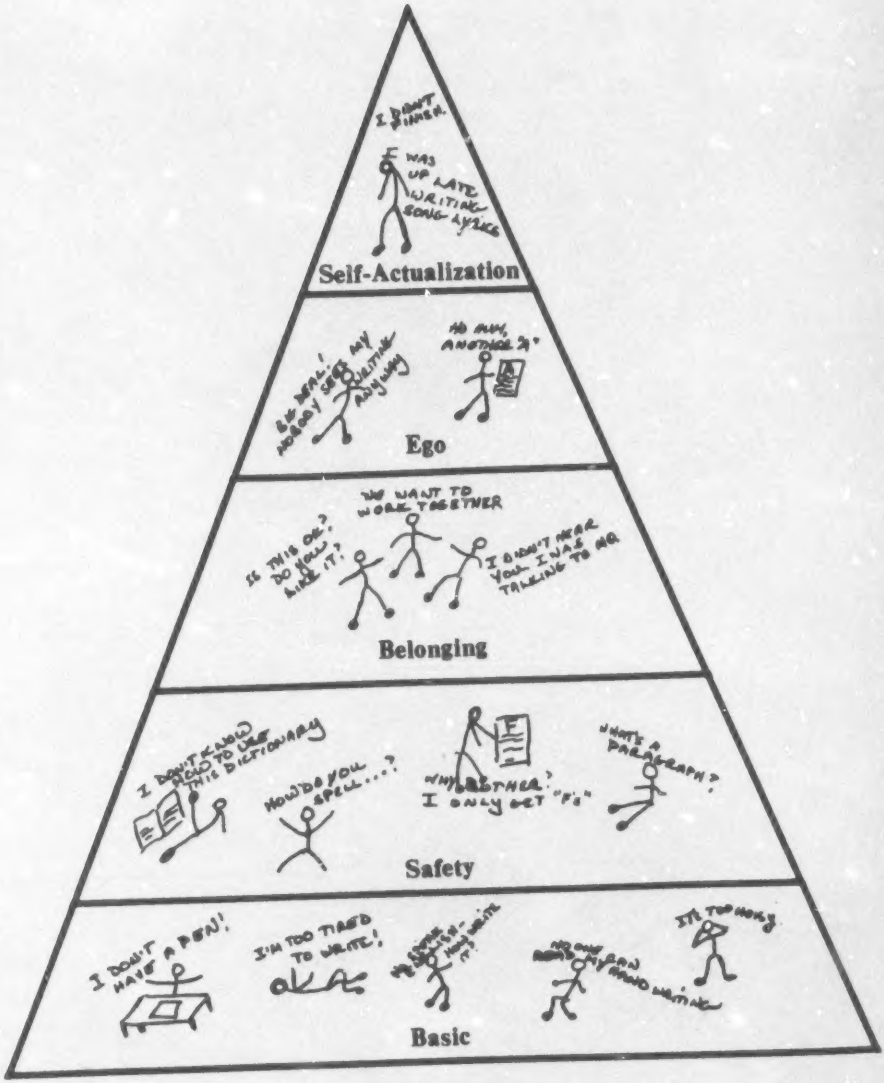
Gardner, John. *Excellence: Can We Be Equal and Excellent, Too?* New York: Harper and Row, 1961.

Maslow, Abraham. *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature.* New York: Viking Press, 1971.

Slavin, Robert E. and Lewis, J. Richard. *Student-Team Learning: Supplementary Manual for Language Arts.* Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University, 1979.

Strzepek, Joseph. "Fiction and the Human Potentiality". *Four Psychologies Applied to Education.* Edited by T. B. Roberts. New York: Schenkman Publishing Company, 1975.

The purpose for education is, says Maslow, the development of the best human beings possible. Strzepek contends that this goal will be facilitated if students are presented with characters in literature who are themselves striving toward self-actualization. This provocative article proposes a balance to the darker pieces of literature often read in school. Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine,* for example, offers a number of self-actualizing characters.


I DIDN'T FINISH.
I WAS UP LATE WRITING SONG LYRICS
Self-Actualization
OH WELL, I GUESS MY ABILITIES ARE LIMITED
NO AW, ANOTHER A?
Ego
WE WANT TO WORK TOGETHER
IS THIS OK? DO YOU LIKE IT?
I DIDN'T HEAR YOU. I WAS TALKING TO ME.
Belonging
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO USE THIS DICTIONARY
HOW DO YOU SPELL...?
WHY, BROTHER? I ONLY GET "F"S
WHAT'S A PARAGRAPH?
Safety
I DON'T HAVE A PEN!
I'M TOO TIRED TO WRITE!
I'M TOO HUNGRY
Basic

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The Authors

Ada Simpers Hill, born and reared in Virginia, received her master's degree from the University of Texas at El Paso. Beginning her teaching career in the Southwest in a middle school, she later taught freshman composition in a community college and English to native-born Mexicans in a language institute. After several years, she returned to the East, where she was appointed English department chairperson at first an inner city and then a suburban high school. Ms. Hill has served most recently as an adjunct faculty member at a community college and a university, where she has taught both undergraduate courses in composition and graduate courses in teaching writing. She has also worked as a business and technical writing consultant. Ms. Hill has made several presentations at state and national conventions and has published many articles on teaching. She is currently a member of Phi Delta Kappa and the executive committee of the Virginia Association of Teachers of English and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Virginia.

Beth Boone is currently an instructor of English at Virginia Commonwealth University although she began her somewhat unusual teaching career as a second grade teacher. Her students have included welfare recipients, prisoners, civil service employees and high school drop-outs of all ages. In 1976 she returned to the public school classroom to teach communicative arts to secondary students. Facing locally-mandated competency tests in composition and students who were afraid of all writing, she began to read, conduct classroom research, and write about teaching writing. In 1979 she attended the Virginia Writing Project summer institute in Richmond, Virginia. Since then, Ms. Boone has spoken at local, state, and national conferences, led many workshops for other teachers, published in professional journals, assisted with the VWP's evaluation, and written a text—as yet unpublished—for writers who are still afraid to write.